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THE MONTH

MAY 1955

THE RUSSIAN SCENE

MARIE NOËLE KELLY

BLESSED JOHN OGILVIE

CHRISTIAN HESKETH

THE POPIISH PLOT

J. J. DWYER

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THE RUSSIAN SCENE¹

By

MARIE NOËLE KELLY

IN EVERYTHING which I have published or said about Russia I have followed an invariable rule; to avoid theories and guess-work and stick to facts—to the facts which I learned during our twenty-eight months in Russia and have checked and kept up-to-date since then by carefully following all the information which has become available since, both in the news and in the way of first-hand information from friends of all nationalities who have been there since we left. It follows that my other rule is to avoid foreign politics and all speculation about them. I think most people now agree that, in practice, as far as we know, there has recently been no substantial change in the general picture, except that the restrictions on the movements of foreign diplomats has been made a little looser. Until two years ago, Stalin had dominated the scene for nearly thirty years. After his death his power was taken over, in what proportions we do not yet know, by his chief lieutenants and by the heads of the Red Army; and the new rulers by a number of gestures let loose a flood of speculation and comment in the Western world. These gestures ranged from a decision to stop the Korean War, and an astonishing somersault over the Jewish doctors, to an amnesty for a mass of non-political prisoners, and invitations to delegations of visitors who were not Communists nor fellow-travellers. One of the Committee, Beria, was liquidated, and his place as a leader, though not his actual job, filled by Mr. Khrushchev, who has identified himself with the rescue of Soviet agriculture, the weakest link in the whole Soviet system; Malenkov, less formidable, resigned peacefully.

All signs of relaxation, whether considered individually or

¹ Lady Kelly was in Russia from 1949 to 1951, where her husband, Sir David Kelly, was H.M.'s Ambassador. She has written two books on their travels, *Mirror to Russia* and *Picture Book of Russia*.

together, are welcome and of interest; but they are none of them inconsistent with the Stalinist régime as a whole, and there is as yet no evidence of any basic changes in the system or any departure from the Stalin-Marx philosophy. I make no claim to be an authority in the philosophy of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, but will endeavour to set down some of my own personal impressions of all that part of the immense Soviet empire which I was able to see in our two and a half years of residence with as much travel as could be managed in that period. There are many Asiatic races in the Soviet Union, but, except for the old kingdom of Georgia in the far-away Caucasus and the Tartars around Astrakhan and the Caspian Sea, I was never allowed to visit any of them. Comment is therefore limited to the real Russians and their cousins the Ukrainians, the people who inhabit European Russia from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and they, of course, are the people who matter because they, in their measure, shape and direct the policy that prevails.

The mention of the word "Russia" leaves two outstanding impressions (which are really two sides of the same thing); they are the all-pervading emphasis on work, and the very secondary place given to pleasure and amusement. These are quite outstanding facts, especially as compared with modern England, and also with the historic Russian character as described by all the old travellers. Everywhere the impression is one of ceaseless activity; the thousands of women clearing the snow do not pause to gossip; in the streets you see pictures of Stakhanovites, workmen who have exceeded their "norm"; men sitting in the parks are nearly always students reading their books; the newspapers are always praising the output of one factory or denouncing the failure of another. Throughout Russian society, from the Politburo down to the street-sweeper, everything is organised to encourage work; for since everything is controlled and planned by the State, it is the State which allocates salaries, housing accommodation, holidays and railway travel. All these things are granted according to the value of the individual's work for the State. A Russian cannot move from one town to another without a permit, and this involves the agreement of his superior. One doesn't just go to a railway station and buy a ticket—one must have an authority saying what one's priority is. Sometimes at railway stations there are fourteen booking-offices for fourteen different grades of

travellers, and those with low priorities may wait whole weeks at a station for room on a train.

In the same way, housing accommodation varies from families living fifteen in a room to the family with a four- or five-roomed flat and a wooden chalet in the country. Of course, that perhaps doesn't happen only in Russia, but the point is that it is the State which decides who shall have the five rooms and who shall have one-fifteenth of a room, and the State makes the allocation according to the kind of work done by the applicant. That is the incentive part. For those who do not respond to the reward of industry there is the Labour Code, which lays down the penalties for slackness, lateness and absenteeism, beginning with four months' corrective labour at the place of employment, accompanied by a fine of one week's wages a month, for being late or absent for twenty minutes during a month. Being absent without permission three times for over twenty minutes involves imprisonment, and incidentally all the accrued social insurance payments are forfeited. Cherished savings are all gone and one has to start afresh. In quoting these examples from the Labour Code, I am not necessarily attacking the Soviet system; the point is that they approach the whole question of labour from a totally different angle. As there is no private industry, slackness or absenteeism are offences against the State, against society. It is a social duty to increase production. For the same reason, the trade unions are not there to represent the workers against the employer (namely, the State), but to help the State to increase production by spreading new technical ideas and suggesting new ways of increasing production. Moreover, since it is everyone's duty to increase production, it is logical that no one should leave his place of work unless the experts agree that he or she can be more usefully employed somewhere else. Strikes are non-existent. Old age pensions are reckoned by length of continuous service in the same job. Last, but not least, in the background are the forced labour camps, by means of which millions of convicts are available for the dangerous and unhealthy jobs—gold-digging, timber-felling, the salt mines, making roads and canals through swamps and deserts. Sometimes one hears doubts about the existence of forced labour, but it is all laid down in the *Soviet Encyclopedia* and the Penal Codes.

The other side to this insistence on work for the build-up of the

Soviet State is the low priority given to amusement. You never see a book or magazine or an advertisement with the kind of pictures we are so accustomed to; you never see a picture outside a cinema or a theatre with the slightest suggestion of sex-appeal; above all, you hardly see a couple embracing in any park or garden. I am not arguing against this, but simply stating the fact that it is the most puritanical country I have ever been in. The authorities have a definite reason for it: they are trying to transform their country into an industrial rival of the United States, and to achieve this they feel that all amusement, unless it is muscular exercise, is a distraction from the gospel of work.

This is the reason also for the official ban on modern music and painting and on plays or films which are merely meant to amuse. Plays and films must be made on subjects laid down by authority, the unmasking of warmongers, bad factory or collective-farm managers, etc. Painters and musicians must not show off their technical cleverness, which is called bourgeois-decadent-formalism, but must produce music or pictures which everyone can understand and which help to explain the Soviet system and make it popular. It is morally wrong for the citizen to waste his leisure time in idle amusement. His recreation must be serious and directed towards making him or her more eager to work for the building up of the Soviet State. When, at one time, a large consignment of prefabricated houses was imposed on Germany, as part of the reparations scheme, and the German engineers planned them with little verandahs, the verandahs were struck out of the plans, as good citizens should not set a bad example to passers-by by sitting idly on verandahs!

It is the same reasoning which has caused the complete change-over since the early revolutionary days in the attitude to divorce. This does not mean any change in moral attitude. The idea is that the State needs large families, and that it is anti-social for individual husbands or wives, once they are married, to indulge their individual preferences by changing their minds.

Just as the change in the State's attitude to divorce is easy to understand once it is understood to have nothing to do with morals in the religious sense, so also there is really no mystery about the State's attitude to the Russian Church. Many people are puzzled about this in the West, because they have heard about the persecution and the closing of the churches in the earlier years and

then they hear from returning delegations about churches being packed with worshippers, men and women. The actual Communist Party, which numbers about six millions out of, say, 210 millions, subscribes to a completely atheistic doctrine, and must always do so, for the whole basis of the Marxist system is its materialist theory, and so anyone who wants to get on must be an atheist also. But for the mass of ordinary working people outside the Party it was decided that open persecution tended to defeat its object, and that it was better to let those go to church who wanted to, provided they were not Party members, and to concentrate on nation-wide propaganda and, above all, on winning over the children and young people. So both versions are true; the State is still anti-religious, but such churches as are open are packed.

Finally, it will have been clear from what I have said about the incentives to work, that the old revolutionary idea of equality has been frankly abandoned on the ground that it cannot be realised until the whole world has become Communist.

Let us sum up these generalisations by supposing we had had the privilege of receiving any of our readers as guests in Moscow. First, we would have a look at the shops. There are no longer any special shops for officials, and anyone can buy what there is for sale if he can afford it. For some shops there are enormously long queues, but they are not shops that foreigners and other well-to-do people need to go to. You would be struck by the disinterested air of the shop assistants. All the shops are State-owned, and the demand for consumer goods usually exceeds the supply, since all the emphasis is on production in the heavy industries—engineering, transport, and so on. The incentive-plus-penalty system does not seem to be applied in the shops.

Now of course everyone is interested in the comparative cost of living, but the difficulty is that this just cannot be put *simply* in the case of Russia. It is not like France or Italy, where you merely have to convert francs or lire into sterling. Russia has no real rate of exchange, only an arbitrary rate for foreign residents. When we arrived this rate was twenty-two roubles to the pound sterling; then suddenly they changed it to eleven roubles twenty kopecks, thereby sending up the cost of our embassy to the taxpayer by £250,000. On this basis we paid thirty-five shillings for just under one pound of butter (nineteen roubles); 14s. 6d. for the same amount of sugar (six roubles eighty kopecks). The cheapest man's

suit, which none of you would be seen in, cost nearly £40 (420 roubles); the most expensive cost £125 (1,380 roubles). A woman's leather-soled shoes cost from £25-40 (265-496 roubles). These were all scarce articles; the average for food and household things was about three times the world price.

There was no real complication for us as foreigners because we had our rate of exchange, but for the Russian it depended on his wages, and the variations in pay were so great, and so complicated by special circumstances in different trades or professions, that no simple standard of comparison exists. Thus, foreigners' servants (a highly-paid class) got per month from 600 to 2,000 roubles (our chauffeur). Miners got from 800 to 2,500 roubles; a senior cashier got 600 roubles; a tractor-driver got a basic 200 roubles plus 150 kilogs of farm produce. As you got higher in the social scale, salaries rose into many thousand roubles a month, and, besides that, two social groups might have similar incomes but pay different rates of tax. So you see that if a woman wanted a pair of shoes costing 440 roubles, *i.e.*, £40, it was all right if her husband was earning £200 a month, but not so good if he was a cashier earning £54 a month.

There was no end to the troubles of buyers. Though there were no longer special shops for officials, and no rationing except by the purse, the shops had a very limited range of commodities, and these of a very utility type (except for furs and jewellery), and they were also very expensive for foreign residents in Russia, as already explained. The result was that we *imported* all our personal requirements and much of our food. For example, in mid-winter the only vegetables in Moscow were cabbages, beetroot and frozen potatoes; so we sent out a lorry in October to stock up potatoes, and imported our other vegetables in tins. One of our colleagues who liked Russian crabmeat actually imported it back from Denmark, because that came cheaper than buying it in Moscow!

Any attempt to reduce the economic statement to some simple formula breaks down. Economists have tried to work it out in man-hours. As is usual with economists, they all disagree with each other. But they do agree on one thing—that overall, an hour's work here does buy more than an hour's work in Soviet Russia. All estimates agree on that—they only differ as to the how much more.

In the evening we would go to the Bolshoi Theatre to see the superb ballet. This is on a scale unknown in the West, with staging and mechanical effects regardless of expense, and a large corps of dancers trained from seven years of age at the 150-year-old ballet school, and a very strenuous training it is. During the intervals one can see all the *élite* walking round and round the big foyers, for here again, as in travelling, one cannot just go and buy a ticket. We applied for ours through the Ministry a week in advance, and the whole theatre would be full of delegations, representatives of the Red Army, the students, special associations, the civil service, visiting delegations from distant Soviet Republics, and often visiting delegations from foreign countries. At the cinemas it was different, unless the show had started; then whether you were admitted or not depended on who you were. The ballet itself, whether in Moscow or Leningrad, is run on traditional conservative lines, all very classical as in the time of the tsars. Here, as in the picture galleries, there is no room for any puzzling modern experimenting, no art for art's sake.

Then, let us assume our guest is of an adventurous disposition and would like to start off with us next day on a visit to some old provincial cities. Some were the capitals of independent republics long before the Tartars came, when Moscow itself was unimportant. If we were going a long way, say to Odessa or the Caucasus or for a voyage on the Volga, we would go by plane, but to the old cities we generally go by train. We had to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a week in advance, exactly where we wanted to go and for how long, and the day before we would have collected the railway tickets and have had the assurance that hotel accomodation was arranged. There would be no question, however, of changing our route or our dates once we got started; everything was laid on with the local and train authorities, and any deviation would mean long correspondence with Moscow. We walk through a station packed with people waiting for their individual grades of priority travel. We enter our reserved "soft-class" compartment and settle down for a journey of twelve or twenty-four hours, as the case may be. We have our provisions, for there is no waggon-restaurant (restaurant-car) except on one or two main lines, but there is a friendly attendant who will bring us glasses of really hot tea at any moment throughout the journey. We travel across a seemingly endless plain, with forests here and

there, many villages of painted wooden farmhouses, sometimes a factory with sentries in little watch-towers at all the corners. At our destination two taxis will be waiting, one for us, one for our plain-clothes bodyguard who will have occupied the railway compartment next to ours. The local opposite numbers of the bodyguard will be there waiting to meet us too, and as the town will be too-little visited by foreigners to have an Intourist Office, there may be a local guide, or, if not at the station, he will appear at the hotel. The hotel will be very simple, but though the lavatory accommodation will be primitive, the bedrooms will be clean and tidy. Very likely there will be no restaurant in the hotel, but the one down the road will have abundant food, though not as a rule a varied menu. You would find that the most difficult thing to get used to was the loudspeaker in the street outside your window, which started shouting at 6 a.m. and never stopped till 11 p.m.

So one ends with a general impression of an enormous flat country, inhabited by many millions of people who all have to work very long hours, with few and simple pleasures; friendly by nature, but scared stiff of foreigners, and looking, despite the differences in pay and privileges, very much alike because of their clothes. If you just walk about the streets by day you get the impression of a people all very much alike, and all just busy on getting from one place to another. It is only when you look at night through the usually uncurtained windows, or when you travel and see the crowds sleeping in the railway waiting-rooms, that you begin to notice the great differences due to the new régime of different rewards for different types and quality of work. It all comes back to the central fact that the authorities are trying in the shortest possible time to transform a backward agricultural country into the greatest industrial and military power in the world, and in comparison with this the preferences and desires of the individual are considered to be of quite secondary importance.

The root of so much bewilderment about Soviet Russia is that people who write about it so often either paint a rosy picture of an earthly paradise, or a picture of unbelievable wickedness without any apparent purpose, instead of trying to understand what the rulers are attempting to do. The picture which I see is neither of a paradise nor of a world of wicked people; but rather of a mass of quite good and well-meaning people who are being

pushed along by a group of efficient, hard-working officials, who are themselves in the grip of a stern, austere doctrine which for them is a religion, and for which they are prepared to sacrifice not only the ordinary individual but themselves as well.

When you look at the Russian scene from that angle, everything begins to fit in. You can see then why, to get the maximum output of labour, you must have incentives resulting in social inequality, and severe penalties for those who remain lazy in spite of the incentives. You can see why all art must be serious and patriotic and soothing. You can begin to understand one of the chief reasons for the "Iron Curtain," for the rigid separation of foreigners from the people, for, in order to build up the heavy industries and the five-year plans, it is necessary for the time being to sacrifice the interests of the consumer, and it is therefore important that the consumer should not be at the mercy of foreigners telling him that the standard of life in their more easy-going countries is higher. Of course, there is also the reason of security, to stop the foreigner spying out industrial and military secrets.

Any attempt to offer a simple estimate of the Russian scene is bound to mislead the reader; but these comments will perhaps explain our outstanding impression. It is the impression of a country where the gospel of work, and work for the State, is given priority over everything else.

BLESSED JOHN OGILVIE

By

CHRISTIAN HESKETH

TO THE INDIFFERENT SPECTATOR it must be admitted that the history of Scotland during the sixteenth century presents an unedifying picture of murder and treason. When King James V died at the age of thirty, of sickness and despair, he left behind him a situation only too familiar in the annals of his unhappy country. His widow was a foreigner. The heir to the throne was a child only a few days old. It was a sad inheritance into which Mary, Queen of Scots was born. The country was poor and bitterly divided against itself. A large part of the nobility was in English pay, and already the new religious doctrines from Geneva and the south were spreading with a rapidity for which Tudor money, as much as genuine religious enthusiasm, was responsible. Against such a determined and well-directed attack the Catholic Church in Scotland, at that time, was in no position to defend itself.

For centuries before the Reformation the Stewart kings had never hesitated to subordinate the spiritual interests of the Church to considerations of political convenience. The ablest of the clergy were called upon to spend their talents in the service of the crown, and, as a result, many of them had neither the time nor the inclination to pursue their proper vocations. At the same time the practice of bestowing vacant benefices on the younger or illegitimate children of the great landed families led to a further abuse. By the sixteenth century certain sees had become no more than the hereditary possession of a few well-endowed families.

It is hardly surprising that when at last a crisis arose, there were few heroes to be found either among priests or people, for to most of them the practice of their religion had become over the years no more than a habit.

In the course of one tumultuous and illegal Parliament the Catholic religion was swept away, and over-night the old sleepy

E faith, to which, in an unenthusiastic way, a majority of the population still adhered, became the proscribed belief of the enemies of the state. The new settlement was not universally acceptable, but among the upper classes, in whose hands alone the decision lay, there was a reluctance, even on the part of Catholics, to oppose a solution which confirmed them in the possession of the recently-confiscated Church lands. By the end of the century there were many educated people living in Scotland whose placid acceptance of Calvinism gives almost no indication of the direction in which their religious convictions may have lain.

Sir Walter Ogilvie of Drumnakeith was of this number. He was a country gentleman of indeterminate religion, nominally a Protestant, perhaps secretly a Catholic, who was well content to live peacefully on the lands he had inherited from his father. It is only by his marriages that one is made aware of the tremendous revolution that had transfigured so many similarly uneventful lives, for, though his first wife was an Elphinstone of the Old Faith, his second was a Protestant Douglas. He had children by both, but whether John Ogilvie, his eldest son, was the child of the first marriage or the second is not known. If he was the son of Agnes Elphinstone it becomes more understandable why, in 1593, when he was only thirteen, his father should have taken the drastic decision to send the boy abroad to complete his education. It is the only glimpse one is allowed of Sir Walter's dormant opinions taking sudden shape, for by sending his son to Catholic France he was acting in flat defiance of the law, and laying himself open to the vengeance of the Kirk.

For the next eighteen years John Ogilvie led a wandering student's life in France and Germany.

He travelled first to Douai, and there, where upon arrival the word "Calvinist" was entered after his name in the students' book, he came first under the influence of the Jesuits by whom the school was run. Five years later, when the College became overcrowded, he was moved to the Benedictine monastery at Ratisbon, and from there, with the help of a bursary, that ladder by which so many needy Scots have climbed to fame and fortune, he secured a place in the Jesuit College at Olmütz. It is tempting to reconstruct some picture of the young Ogilvie at this date, to make a guess at what his appearance, his manners and his interests may have been, but indeed there is only one trait of his that emerges with any cer-

tainty, and that is the extraordinary persistence and single-mindedness of purpose that was as characteristic of the boy as of the man. He was determined to join the Society of Jesus, and with that ambition in view he offered himself, along with some other boys, to the Jesuit Provincial in Austria, Fr. Ferdinand Albieri. As the plague was rampant at the time in the neighbourhood of Bränn, where the noviciate was situated, the Provincial rather naturally turned down the request and told the young men to wait. All agreed to do so, but Ogilvie, to whom any delay was intolerable, pursued Albieri to Vienna, and obtained his permission to enter the noviciate at once. So he came to Bränn. He was nineteen, a restless young man who knew already exactly what he wanted. There was a feeling of urgency about him that was apt to repel those whom it did not attract, and even as a student he worked with relentless concentration, as one who knows that time is short. From 1599 until his departure to Scotland, John Ogilvie was never in one place for long. He studied philosophy at Grätz, and it was here that he took his first vows as a Jesuit. From Grätz he travelled, by way of Neuhaus, to Vienna, and there, for over a year, he taught grammar and literature in the Jesuit noviciate. Finally, six years after leaving Olmütz, he returned there again.

Already plans were afoot for sending him to Scotland, and in 1610, Acquaviva, the General of the Jesuits, sent orders that Ogilvie should be transferred from the Austrian to the French Province. It must have seemed strange to him, after the years of training in Austria and Germany, to hear his own language spoken once again, and to find that the affairs of Scotland were to become once more the one absorbing interest in his life. He travelled first to Prague, where he met Fr. Elphinstone, a fellow-Jesuit and perhaps a kinsman, and thence to Paris, where he was ordained priest.

Here he met for the first time the three Jesuits who, of their Order, knew most about Scottish affairs, James Gordon, William Crichton and Patrick Anderson. Of these, Gordon was the senior and undoubtedly also the most distinguished. He was an uncle of the Marquis of Huntly, and it had always been his ambition to see established in Scotland a form of toleration much disliked by almost everyone in the sixteenth century, a society in which freedom of worship would be guaranteed to all, and religious disagreement would be resolved by public debate.

There was a moment when it looked as if Gordon's dream

might even become a reality, but intolerance soon prevailed, and in 1611, when Fr. Anderson and his fellow-Jesuits at last completed the report on Scottish affairs for which their Superiors had asked, they could only draw a gloomy picture of their past activities in that unhappy country and the future that lay in store for them there.

Calvinism had triumphed. In spite of King James's sympathy and the secret support of a few influential noblemen, the Church had lost ground steadily since the Reformation. Fines, confiscations and the prospect of the death penalty were a discouragement to those who still clung to the practices of the old religion. The country was full of spies and informers. A priest had to live like an outlaw, and often sleep in the fields, if he wished to keep his freedom for more than a few weeks.

The Jesuits contemplated a future devoid of comfort or optimism. Nevertheless it was in a mood of light-hearted anticipation that in 1613 John Ogilvie, accompanied by Fr. Moffat and a Capuchin called Fr. Campbell, embarked on the boat that was to carry them to Scotland. At last he was going home. The little party landed at Leith, and it was in the character of Captain Watson, a military man with an eye for horseflesh, that Ogilvie returned to his own country. He was thirty. The land that he had not seen for nearly twenty years must at first have seemed oddly unfamiliar to him. Of the friends and relatives he had left behind him long ago, few would have recognised him now. He had left home as a gentleman's son, with the prospect of a distinguished career before him. He returned as an outlaw, a man whose profession alone made him an object of suspicion and dislike to the majority of his fellow-countrymen.

But the life he had chosen was one that suited him well. He was sharp-witted and resourceful, and young enough to make light of the discomforts that quickly crippled so many of the older priests. He brought to Scotland all the ardour and certainty of the Counter-Reformation. The failures, the gnawing disappointments of the past meant nothing to him. He had not known, like Gordon and Crichton, the years of alternating hope and despair, during which they had conducted, with a succession of Scottish governments, a series of futile negotiations. They had lived to see Calvinism become in fact as well as in name the official religion of the country, to witness the ruin of their friends and the

birth of a new generation, to whom Catholicism was an alien mystery.

If at times their views conflicted, on one point, at least, they were in whole-hearted agreement. Without the support of the nobility there could be no widespread Catholic revival in Scotland. And in this they were right. A priest might find temporary shelter in the towns, if he behaved with discretion, and was seen as little as possible by prying eyes. But under these conditions the influence he would be able to wield and his chances of making converts must necessarily be limited. It was only a great nobleman like Huntly, the possessor of vast estates, who could risk the government's displeasure and give effective shelter to a priest. And the advantage of such protection was enormous. The Chaplain of a great house could travel with a freedom that was denied to an itinerant missionary without money or connections. He could celebrate Mass and administer the sacraments in a wide area, and with the satisfaction of knowing that as long as his patrons remained constant, the work he had begun would be carried on, and other priests would encourage and instruct the flock he had gathered together.

All this must have been apparent to John Ogilvie for, during his brief ministry in Scotland, he came to know all the scattered congregations of which the Catholic community was composed, the small secret enclaves in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the splendours of Strathbogie, where the Marquis of Huntly had his seat, and the widely-dispersed clansmen of the Highlands.

From Leith, where he had first landed, he travelled north to Aberdeenshire, and it was at Strathbogie that his first Christmas was spent. We do not know how far his travels took him at this time, and whether he rode on the rough tracks of the central Highlands or visited those remote clans on the western seaboard, who, as the Irish Franciscans were to find twenty years later, had never heard of the Reformation. In view of his upbringing it is likely that he spoke Gaelic and would know something of Highland customs and prejudices.

In the early days of the new year John Ogilvie travelled south from Aberdeenshire to Edinburgh, and through the kindness of another priest working on the Scottish mission, he was introduced to an advocate in the city, one William Sinclair, and became a lodger in his house. To all who might enquire he was still Captain

Watson, but as time passed he became more of a horse-coper than a soldier. He was often to be seen on the roads, his eye always open for a bargain, negotiating for likely animals on behalf of his friend Mr. Cruickshank, an acquaintance of Sinclair's who kept a stable in the Canongate. Sinclair's house was the principal meeting-place for Catholics in Edinburgh, and here a small congregation would gather as often as possible, to hear Mass and exchange information. The numbers were small, only a handful of merchants, shopkeepers, and servants brought up in the great Catholic houses. Singly, or in small discreet groups, they came to Sinclair's house, desperately anxious to avoid attention and the watchful eyes of their enemies. Discovery meant certain ruin, and there were some among them who were, at first, reluctant to meet the new priest, on whose discretion they were not yet sure if they could rely. Even Sinclair must sometimes have wondered how Ogilvie, who had lived most of his life abroad, and was by nature impetuous and adventurous, would adapt himself to the solitary and cautious life of a priest on the Scottish mission.

In the February of 1614 John Ogilvie, having a scheme in his head which he considered to be of some importance, rode southwards to London, and communicated his plan, whatever it may have been, either to the King or to one of his advisers. In spite of constant disappointments the Scottish Catholics never quite lost the hope that some sort of bargain might yet be struck with the King, and John Ogilvie's negotiations were typical of a dozen others that went on during the reign. What passed between the Jesuit and King James is not known, but Ogilvie was evidently so encouraged by his reception that he crossed over to France and proceeded to lay the whole matter before his Superior in Paris. James Gordon was not impressed. In the course of a long life he had seen a number of similar projects come to nothing, and he thought and said that Ogilvie's time could have been spent more profitably in Scotland than journeying round England and France on self-imposed errands. The young man was sent back to his country without thanks, although the encouraging letter he received shortly after from the General of the Jesuits must have gone far to soften the rebuke.

It was in June when he crossed over to England again and travelled north for the last time. Sir James Knelland was his companion on the long journey, a fellow-Scot who was to become

one of his penitents. Glasgow was now his headquarters, the small bustling University town whose great cathedral had been saved from the fury of the Reformation by the devotion of the burghers. A Franciscan namesake introduced him, on his first arrival, to the small discreet group which in Glasgow, as in Edinburgh, made up the Catholic community, and he was soon at home in his new surroundings. He lodged in a tavern, with a boldness that was in keeping with his supposed profession, and the dealings he had with Mr. Cruickshank still gave colour to his numerous journeys. He travelled widely, visiting the Catholic gentry in Renfrewshire and the neighbourhood of Glasgow, but the town itself remained his constant refuge, and here, in the house of a widow named Marion Walker, he would celebrate Mass and receive some of the converts who were introduced to him by Robert Heygate. The Heygate family played such an important part in John Ogilvie's life at this time that they deserve a moment's attention, not least because they illustrate the deep divisions that existed even among the most devout seventeenth-century Scots Catholics. Robert Heygate's parents were Catholics, but they were evidently people to whom the idea of giving hostages to fortune had at all times a limited appeal, and although Robert, their elder son, had been brought up in their own religion, the younger one, James, was a Protestant. Robert in due course married, but his Calvinist wife appears to have been as ignorant of her husband's religious practices as James was of his parents'. It was a curious situation, but one that was not unknown at the time.

September found John Ogilvie in Edinburgh again. There was more work to be done, he wrote to his Superiors, than any one priest could manage. Concealment was a constant problem, and he found it safer to carry out his duties, whenever possible, at night, while during the day he went about his ordinary business, or discussed the affairs of the day with his unsuspecting neighbours in the streets and alehouses of the town. It was only a year since he had returned to Scotland, friendless and inexperienced, but in those few months he had matched, with his heroism, the reckless demands forced upon him by the times. From the harried Catholics who came to him for consolation and advice he asked for courage and endurance and the sacrifice of worldly hopes, for more than they had ever been asked to give before. And because

he asked for nothing for himself, and risked so much, they gave him, in the end, not only what he demanded of them, but their trust as well.

In the early days of October John Ogilvie returned to the west, where he had been told that five people who wished to become reconciled to the Church were anxiously awaiting his coming.

Shortly after his arrival in Glasgow we find him discussing religion with two Protestants and Robert Heygate over a convivial "chopine of wine." The meeting was friendly, and although the Protestants remained unconvinced by the priest's arguments, it is greatly to their credit that they made no attempt subsequently to earn a large reward by betraying him to the government. But there were others who were less scrupulous.

Adam Boyd had come to suspect that Heygate was sheltering a priest, and after finding out the names of those who attended Mass in Marion Walker's house, and the identity of the priest, he arranged for Ogilvie to be seized one afternoon when he was out walking with a friend in the street. The arrest became a brawl, and after receiving a rough handling from the mob that had taken him, John Ogilvie was thrown into prison for the night. Next day he was brought before the Burghal Court, over which James Spottiswoode, Archbishop of Glasgow, presided. During the last five months of his life Ogilvie appeared before five tribunals in turn, and at each examination the grounds of accusation narrowed, until at the last trial only the Papal supremacy and the limits of the King's authority were the points at issue.

But at his first examination Ogilvie's accusers had not yet decided on the line of attack that it would be most profitable for them to pursue, and their questions ranged aimlessly from one aspect of the priest's activities to another. They asked him his name, his opinion of the Gunpowder Plot, the scope of the Pope's authority, and the places where he had celebrated Mass. After first making it clear that he would not answer on oath any questions that might endanger either his own life or that of others, Ogilvie proceeded to argue the other disputed points. He had come to Scotland, he said, "to un-teach heresy, and save souls." It was of faith, he asserted, that the Pope's spiritual authority extended even to Protestant kingdoms. Questioned about the part played by the Jesuits in the Gunpowder Plot, he declared that Garnet's silence had been justified, and when Spottiswoode

replied that he himself would certainly betray any man, even under the seal of the confessional, who told him of a plot against the King's life, Ogilvie merely remarked that "it would be unwise, then, for one to choose you as a confessor." The arguments about Garnet grew so wearisome that at last he grew impatient. "I came to Scotland to preach Christ and not Garnet," he said. "I have to answer for my acts as he already has answered to God for his. Each for himself, and God for us all." So the examination came to an end. The prisoner was shivering with cold and hunger, and after being allowed to warm himself for a short time by the fire, he was taken back to prison. That night Spottiswoode wrote an account of the affair to the King. Fourteen Glasgow citizens who were proved to have had dealings with the Jesuit were to be heavily fined and punished. Robert Heygate was to be banished for life. The Archbishop also asked for permission to use torture on the prisoner.

Of all the priests who fell into the hands of the Scottish government after the Reformation, Ogilvie was the only one to be executed. The party in power was not anxious to make religion a capital offence, both from motives of humanity and because the economic sanctions at its disposal made such a drastic step unnecessary. But for two reasons John Ogilvie was an exception. In the first place he had been too successful. A priest who skulked in the remote Highlands, or the old and feeble chaplain of some decayed nobleman, might hope to be overlooked, but a young man who rode round Scotland as boldly as a trooper, finding friends and allies, not only among the Catholics but in the taverns of Edinburgh and chance-met acquaintances on the road, was a real menace to the established order. And secondly, it was Ogilvie's misfortune to fall into the hands of Archbishop Spottiswoode at a time when a scapegoat was of some value to the Scottish hierarchy. It was one of the major triumphs of King James's not unsuccessful reign that after a severe struggle he had succeeded in imposing Episcopacy on the Calvinist Kirk. From the first the authority of the new bishops, limited though it was, aroused widespread resentment. And among the bishops none was more suspect than Spottiswoode, an Erastian of the deepest dye, and, it was felt, a poacher turned gamekeeper as well, for before his elevation no one had held more orthodox Calvinist views on bishops than the future Archbishop of Glasgow.

The Scottish bishops thus found themselves in an invidious position, and in order to prove the soundness of their Protestant principles and dispel the illusion that Prelacy and Popery were both limbs of the same accursed tree, they were driven to make an example of the Catholics still surviving in Scotland. John Ogilvie's capture thus came at a time when his judges were neither in a mood nor a position to show mercy.

While he lay in prison after the first examination, chained by the feet to an iron bar that allowed him only to sit or lie on his back in comfort, his supporters were brought to trial. His papers, through treachery, had all been seized, and as a result Spottiswoode was able to spread the rumour that the information on which the accused were being tried had been betrayed, under duress, by Ogilvie himself. So, when he rode out of Glasgow at the beginning of December, on his way to face the Lords of the Privy Council in Edinburgh, a hostile crowd had gathered in the streets. All the friends and relations of the condemned Catholics were there, and as the Jesuit passed, stones and curses were hurled at the man who, as they believed, had betrayed his trust. It may be that he recognised, in the frenzied woman who called down a curse on his twisted countenance, the mother of Robert Heygate, for his answer was dictated by compassion: "Christ's blessing on thy bonny face." There was snow on the ground as the cavalcade passed through the city gates, and rode east, over the bleak and frozen roads, to Edinburgh.

On 12 December the prisoner was taken before the Privy Council for the first time. Once again he was asked for the names of those who had sheltered him, and taxed with disloyalty to the King. He had come to Scotland in defiance of the laws, it was pointed out, and preached treason to the people. Ogilvie's answer was prompt. "The King cannot forbid me my country without legitimate cause"; and when his accusers replied that the plotting of the Jesuits was in itself sufficient cause, he reminded them that the King had only to practise the religion of his ancestors and he would have nothing to fear from the Jesuits. Before the examination came to an end Ogilvie was ordered to obey the King or "endure the worst." Then he was led away to a dungeon beneath the Castle, and here for over a week he was kept without sleep. When he became too weary to stand his gaolers drove needles under his nails, and day by day he was assailed with

questions. After six days of this treatment Spottiswoode was obliged to admit defeat. He claimed that some information had been dragged from the prisoner, but if this is true it was evidently not enough to assist the enquiry, and, after a further brief examination, the Archbishop rode back, on Christmas Eve, to Glasgow, taking John Ogilvie with him. For nearly a month he remained Spottiswoode's prisoner, but by now an understanding that was almost friendship had grown between the two men, and Ogilvie was allowed to walk in the orchards of the palace and argue with the visitors who came and went. On 18 January he was brought before a royally appointed Commission, over which Spottiswoode presided, and five questions, drawn up by the King himself, were put to him. It was on the answers he gave to these questions, all of which dealt with the relationship between the Catholic Church and a Protestant state, that John Ogilvie was finally tried for his life. At the end of January he wrote a letter recommending Robert Heygate to the kindness of the Jesuit General Acquaviva, but as he was now once again chained to an iron pole in his cell, even the writing of letters must have become a difficult occupation.

On the last day of February Ogilvie was escorted to the Town House, where his judges awaited him. The scaffold on which he was to die was already erected, and the only purpose of the trial was to establish the fact that Ogilvie still upheld the opinions he had maintained before the Commission a few weeks before. Everybody in that crowded court-house knew that in the stark contest between King and prisoner a compromise was impossible. No Catholic could admit the King's authority on spiritual matters, and no head of a national church could ask for less. Both sides believed they stood for law and order, but it was to the older and medieval tradition of universal Christendom that the Jesuit appealed, against the rawer nationalism of a Protestant State. By one o'clock the trial was over, and John Ogilvie was sentenced to die that same afternoon. When the court was cleared he knelt with his face to the wall and prayed "with a cold devotion" until the sheriff and the hangman came to fetch him. The minister who accompanied him to the scaffold was at pains to tell the crowd assembled there that the prisoner was to die for treason, and Ogilvie protested against the interpretation put upon his actions. "I am ready," he declared passionately, "to shed my last drop of

blood against the King's foes. I die for the Catholic religion." His hands were tied, and as he ascended the ladder he prayed aloud, first in Latin and then in English. With a last gesture he flung into the crowd the small rosary he carried. It struck a young man who was standing in the throng, a Protestant nobleman on his travels, who had come, curious and indifferent, to see the priest die. Afterwards he returned to his own country, but the incident haunted him, and he knew no peace of mind till he had joined the Catholic Church. He was John Ogilvie's last convert.

THE POPISH PLOT

By

J. J. DWYER

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME that the C.R.S. has published a full-scale historical work,¹ and it has been done in admirable and impressive fashion. In addition to the long Latin text and the brilliant translation, there is an exceedingly informative Introduction of some sixteen pages followed by a special Preface by the translator with explanations as to the treatment of documents used by Fr. Warner but extant in the original English. There is a full apparatus of notes and references, due in part to assistance, on points of detail, by many Catholic scholars. There are also various appendices, two bibliographies, *viz.*, of Warner's writings and of the authorities cited in the footnotes, and a particularly careful index. The frontispiece of Part I is a reproduction of the portrait (now at Stonyhurst College) of the martyred Provincial, Blessed Thomas Whitbread, S.J.

The two following passages may indicate the high quality of Fr. Bligh's translation of Warner's fluent and vigorous but rather involved Latin. Many samples might be taken, for there are

¹ Catholic Record Society: *Warner's History of English Persecution of Catholics and the Presbyterian Plot*. Edited by Professor T. A. Birrell, M.A., with translation by the Rev. John Bligh, S.J. Printed for the Society, Part I, 1953 (Vol. XLVII); Part II, 1955 (Vol. XLVIII).

many kinds of writing, narrative, exposition, argument, dialogue, declamation.

Oates also affirmed that Mark Preston was both a priest and a Jesuit; that he had himself often confessed to Preston, seen him offering the sacrifice of the Mass and had received Communion from him. Preston replied: "See, noble Lords, how far the man who gives this evidence is to be depended on. I am a layman, with a wife and children, as my neighbours know—and I have not moved house for eleven years." Oates was somewhat nonplussed by these and other similar answers. Being caught out in flagrant lies and perjuries, he stopped for a while. But the Speaker of the Lower House encouraged him to continue, saying in a loud voice: "Take heart, Master Oates; carry on and say boldly what remains. We are sitting here not merely to hear you, but to believe you as well." (Section 146.)

Section 611 deals with the proposed impeachment of Fitzharris:

The Commons knew that if the Peers had accepted the trial of this case in which they (the Commons) would act as the prosecution, it would always be in their power either to press the trial or let it go, just as they chose. So by this degree they were designing a means of impunity for anyone they wished, no matter what his crime might be. That is the reason why the Commons maintained the general principle that no other court whatever may hold a trial of persons accused by them without violation of the rights of Parliament; and so judges were deterred from trying any whom Parliament had once accused.

Fr. John Warner, S.J. (1628-1692), the author of this history, had been at one time on the English Mission and at the outbreak of the Popish Plot, when the Provincial, Fr. Thomas Whitbread was imprisoned, he was appointed Vice-Provincial and then, in December 1679, Provincial. In 1683 he became Rector of St. Omers and in 1686, Chaplain to King James II. While holding this appointment at the Court of St. James's he completed the history of the plot for which he had already been collecting information. On the fall of James II he managed, after some adventures and a month's imprisonment, to get away, and thenceforward followed the fortunes of the exiled king. He had already been the principal Catholic pamphleteer during the troubled years; his *Vindication of English Catholics* and other writings had designated him as the person best qualified to tell the whole story, and in July 1685 he had been so instructed by the Father General of the Jesuits.

In the exceedingly interesting Introduction, the Editor admits a certain measure of disappointment with Fr. Warner as an historian. There are things we should like to know instead of being given long extracts from the scaffold speeches and from state papers now accessible in printed form. The writer's interest, naturally, centres mainly on the Jesuit Plot-victims; there is not much here about the secular or the Franciscan priest-martyrs, or about the three Benedictines tried along with Sir George Wake-man, or the six priests tried and sentenced (but not executed) in 1680. Nevertheless, it is a considerable achievement, containing a great deal of important material which ought to be far better known. Though sometimes prolix and woolly he is nearly always informative.

At the outset he affirms his conviction that the "Plot" was the work of revolutionaries who themselves harboured the design of overthrowing the monarchy. He goes on methodically to expound the English Constitution, which he calls "monarchic" but not "mixed"; by this he means that the King, without being absolute, is the effective ruler. He is a very High Tory and entertains no doubts about the dispensing powers of the Sovereign. It is beyond dispute, he says, that the supreme power resides in the King alone, Parliament being simply "a supreme council," that the King can do most things without it, whereas it can accomplish nothing without him—which is probably what he was told by James II. After a short account of the Reformation in England, he points out that no country is more fertile in producing new sects.

There are Anabaptists, Chiliasts or Millenarists, Quakers, Independents, Fifth Monarchy Men and others of the same sort. The English call them Nonconformists because they refuse to conform to the Anglican Church. I shall call them all Presbyterians, since they hide under their cloak, communicate their plans to them and aim at the same objectives.

He does not trouble to go into their differences theologically because he is quite sure that really they are all republicans. He was not far wrong. He may have known that in 1643 the Long Parliament had adopted the Solemn League and Covenant, thereby making Presbyterianism the Established Religion of England, and that there were in the country some 35,000 veterans of Cromwell's armies who had not forgotten "the Good Old Cause." It was clear to him, therefore, that the whole business was a kind of

resurgence of the Civil War and the link between the Great Rebellion and the Glorious Revolution.

Fr. Warner goes on to describe the judicial system, juries, penalties, etc., the government of London, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs, the value of English money. He has an eye for certain peculiarities. He has found out the legal explanation of "cutting off with a shilling," and why men already in peril of death are willing to incur the dreadful *peine forte et dure*. As a man of his time he is interested in comets and other portents and in the touch for the king's evil.

When we get nearer to events we begin to notice the gaps in his story. He does not appear to know the precedents, *viz.*, the so-called Irish Plot of 1661 or the imposture of the French adventurer who called himself Luzancy. When he mentions the second trial of Colledge, "the Protestant Joiner" at Oxford, one of the turning-points in the history of the Plot, he does not state the charges or the very remarkable fact that Dugdale and Turberville, witnesses *against* the prisoner, were in open conflict with Oates and Boldron, witnesses *for* the prisoner. An even more striking omission is the immensely important Pepys-Atkins case, which in our time¹ has been so brilliantly expounded by Sir Arthur Bryant. He describes Roger L'Estrange as "the unrelenting hammer and implacable foe of the fanatics," and remarks that L'Estrange is considered to have done more for the King's authority than a whole army could have done. He would perhaps have been still more interested had he known that in 1644 L'Estrange, when under sentence of death as a Royalist, was visited by Puritan ministers and offered a pardon if he would take the Covenant.

Fr. Warner, understandably, felt deep concern over the doings of those who had taken, and induced others to take, the Oath of Allegiance and were consequently at variance with those who had conscientiously refused it. It is perhaps sufficient here to recall the fact that the framers of the Oath, Bancroft (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1604-1610) and Sir Christopher Perkins, an apostate, had carefully inserted in the formula repudiating the Deposing Power a declaration that the claim was "impious, heretical and damnable." These violent expressions were of course intended to prevent as many Catholics as possible from

¹ *Samuel Pepys, the Years of Peril*, 1935. Second Edition, 1948.

taking the Oath, to discredit those who did in the eyes of the others, and to justify the persecution of all who had refused it.

On the other hand, there is not much in this narrative to explain the anti-Catholic frenzy which fell upon plague-struck, fire-struck London in those years. Suspicion had been growing for a long time and with it all kinds of fear. Those who remember the First World War can understand how preposterous rumours gain credence by general repetition and by the asseverations of people who say that they have seen what in fact they have not seen.

The Duke of York, despite his services in the Dutch Wars, was an object of suspicion. Catherine of Braganza was in a measure repeating the mistake of Henrietta Maria; rumours were in circulation about subservience to the designs of Louis XIV. Anglican preaching relied greatly on the errors of Rome, on the fires of Smithfield, the Armada, and, above all, the Gunpowder Plot and "the Irish Massacre" of 1641. For all that, the "Popish Plot" is the most discreditable episode in English history and there has consequently been a conspiracy of reticence about it. Macaulay led the way by carefully beginning his detailed narrative with the accession of James II; his design of providing a counterblast to Lingard would by no means have been furthered if he had had to give details about the Plot trials. J. R. Green's *Short History* makes no mention of Scroggs—or of Blessed Oliver Plunkett. In S. R. Gardiner's *Student's History of England*, a work of nearly one thousand pages, there was no room for the name of a single priest-martyr; the only victims mentioned are Coleman and Lord Stafford. Tout tells how juries were brow-beaten and is the only one to speak of "many innocent sufferers," though he does not name them. A very recent and very good general history of England,¹ after referring to the "murder or suicide" of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, hurries along with: "Coleman and some Jesuits went to the scaffold." A book written in 1903,² which explicitly attributes the murder to "the Jesuits or their agents," was re-issued with that charge still retained in 1944.

It took more than prejudice and perjury and the offer of large money rewards for "evidence" to bring about the reign of terror created by the eager co-operation of the managers and the wit-

¹ *A History of England. From the Coming of the English to 1918*, by Keith Feiling, 1950.

² *The Popish Plot*, by John Pollock, 1903.

nesses. The infamous conduct of the English judiciary in these trials is no great surprise to those who are acquainted with what befell Catholics under Elizabeth, after 1579; but it is a thing that the modern "general reader" has no idea of. The prisoner in those treason trials was given no opportunity of knowing what the charges were going to be, or of the evidence of fact by which they could be supported. He heard the statements of the witnesses for the first time when—for the first time—he saw those miscreants in court. He had no opportunity of collecting evidence in defence. His legal adviser, when there was one, could not conduct his case, cross-examine, or address the jury. The judges invariably told the juries that they were not to believe anything said by a Catholic, prisoner or witness; it was bound to be false and their lies and equivocations were, in any case, absolved in advance. Macaulay said somewhere that at the time of the Rye House Plot it was more dangerous to be a Whig than to be a highwayman. It was more dangerous still, between 1678 and 1681, to be a Catholic. The great value of Fr. Warner's narrative is that it will bring so many details and actual words to the knowledge of readers who are not likely to peruse the reports of the State Trials and who will not find those things in the general run of English history books.

Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey had disappeared from his home on Saturday, 12 October, 1678, and within a few hours London was filled with rumours that he had been murdered by Papists. On the following Thursday he was found dead in a ditch at Primrose Hill. His neck had been broken; there were marks of strangulation which, according to the doctors, had been the cause of death. His body was transfixed with his own sword and there was a second wound, less deep; it also appeared that he must have been starved for at least two days. Finally, the well-polished shoes, in that muddy field, showed that he had met his death somewhere else.

Few men, wrote Burnet, had lived on better terms with the Papists than Godfrey. Yet the magistrate had himself expressed the fear that he would be "knocked on the head." Godfrey's recorded words were: "Upon my conscience, I shall be the first martyr. I do not fear them if they come fairly. I shall not part with my life tamely." What he meant by these enigmatic words has never been clearly established.

Two suggestions, equally familiar and equally untenable, were

suicide, and a murder committed by the Jesuits. Sidney Lee wrote, long ago, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that the most probable theory was that Oates and his associates caused Godfrey to be murdered to give colour to their "discoveries" and to intensify the excitement. During the five days of the magistrate's disappearance, Shaftesbury had kept the town buzzing with rumours of a popish crime and now the crime was manifest. Scroggs actually said at the trial of Hill, Green and Berry—the three innocent men who were hanged for the deed—that "the genuineness of the Plot was wonderfully proved by the murder." No further evidence or argument was needed: the Plot was the explanation of the murder, and the murder proved the existence of the Plot. For the Catholics under the deadly accusation, already formulated and sworn to, of plotting the death of the King and the violent overthrow of the established religion, this was the worst conceivable disaster. Naturally, the Jesuits had done it, because everyone knew that they were capable of anything. That this nonsense, propagated by Shaftesbury's Green Ribbon Men, was believed at the time is comprehensible. What is not comprehensible is that it should have found its way into the *Cambridge Modern History*.¹

That particular aberration is apparently due to an innuendo by Lord Acton. There were, he wrote, three unravelled mysteries: "What was going on between Coleman and Père La Chaise; how Oates got hold of the wrong story; and who killed Godfrey." Coleman's unguarded and ill-chosen expressions, due to the intemperate zeal of a convert, have long been naturally and reasonably interpreted, though they were, at the fatal time, a match to powder. As regards Oates—what story was there for him to get hold of? He was not at all likely to have heard of the secret Treaty of Dover. He was never, at any time, in a position to get hold of anything. His character and conduct, the fact that he knew no language but English, his very appearance and demeanour made it preposterous to suppose that he had ever been entrusted by people who knew him, let alone by consummate intriguers, with any mission or any secret. What could such a man have ever heard, in any college or seminary, but table-talk and some uninformed optimistic remarks?² The circumstances

¹ C.M.H., V, p. 222.

² Dryden's cautious line:

Some truth there was, but dashed and brewed with lies . . .
is an exaggeration. There was no truth at all in those wild stories.

surrounding Godfrey's disappearance and death are so strange that they have in recent years interested the amateurs of "detective" literature and various solutions, some quite unrelated to the Popish Plot, have been propounded. Be that as it may, the deed brought upon the Catholics, who were alleged to have perpetrated it in their own interest, twenty-eight judicial murders and wide-spread and incalculable suffering. Fr. Warner states that Oates himself said, presumably later on:

"That murder happened well for me. I believe not a word on't [*i.e.*, not a word of Bedloe's oath that the Catholics were responsible]; but my Plot had come to nothing without it; it made well for me; I believe the Council would never have taken any further notice of me else, if he had not been found."

Bedloe's story was the result of the offer of the enormous reward of £500. He did not know Godfrey by sight, says Fr. Warner, and had perhaps never heard of him. Two witnesses being necessary, corroboration was soon obtained by infamous means. Miles Prance, the Queen's jeweller, was arrested and so grievously ill-treated that the unfortunate terrified man was ready to swear to anything. When he retracted, the ill-treatment recommenced in such a fashion that he promptly reaffirmed his story.

Relating the trial of Coleman, Fr. Warner says that the Secretary had whole-heartedly promoted the Catholic cause "with great zeal but occasionally without due prudence." Actually, in what was seized of Coleman's correspondence there was not the smallest proof of any participation in projects of assassination or rebellion. But Fr. Warner's remark that, in the copies of the letters to Père La Chaise, "there was nothing against Charles and much in his favour," misses the real point. What destroyed Coleman was the passage which he quotes:—

We are at work on an immense task, the conversion of three kingdoms and perhaps after that victory over the pestilent heresy which has long dominated a large part of the North. Never have there been such good hopes of success since the death of Mary.

That is why Scroggs said to the prisoner: "Mr. Coleman, your own papers are enough to condemn you." And there was another expression, not quoted by Fr. Warner, that was even more deadly: "Success will give *the greatest blow* to the Protestant religion that

it has received since its birth." That fatal phrase recalled the wording of the famous letter received by Lord Monteagle in the Gunpowder Plot. Once those words about "a great blow" were read out in court it was useless for the prisoner to protest that he had never desired that the conversion of England should come about by illicit or violent means and that he had never seen Oates till the day they had both appeared before the Council, nor seen Bedloe until he had been brought into court.

In nearly all the trials it was the same; no notice was taken of anything said by or on behalf of the accused. In describing the trial of "The Five Jesuits," Whitbread, Harcourt, Fenwick, Gavan and Turner, who were tried together and executed together at Tyburn, 20 June, 1679, Fr. Warner says that Scroggs "raved with the utmost violence."

"Their doctrines [said the Lord Chief Justice] are well-known. They think it right and permissible not only to deceive heretics and for that purpose to swear and forswear, but to kill them too, even to kill Kings when they have been proscribed by the Pope. Nay more, they think it a pious and meritorious duty to do these things at the Pope's command."

Fr. Warner relates fully the trial of the lawyer, Richard Langhorne, whose offence was that he had managed the temporal affairs of the Jesuit Fathers, and he is careful to record that Langhorne was kept under sentence of death for a month, during which time the prisoner was repeatedly visited by Shaftesbury and offered his life if he would acknowledge the Plot and make fresh disclosures.

The trial and execution of Viscount Stafford fills many pages, due mainly to the amount of material provided by the long dialogues between the Lord High Steward¹ and the prisoner and by the "dying speech and last prayer" of the latter. Here, again, Fr. Warner omits the point that interests the modern reader. Stafford, who did not defend himself very adroitly, relied too much on the consciousness of innocence and actually claimed that his innocence ought to be presumed until there was proof of his guilt. This assumption, a commonplace of modern times, was promptly swept aside by the Lord High Steward. When the charge was treason it was openly held that the safety of the King's person and

¹ Stafford, as a peer, was tried by the House of Lords, the Lord Chancellor, Finch, presiding as Lord High Steward.

crown were far more important than the life of any prisoner, guilty or innocent. "Look you, my Lord," said Finch, "the true reason is that if the law were otherwise there would be great safety in conspiring the death of the King." On the other hand, we have here Stafford's copious and emphatic repudiation of all teaching about Equivocation, the Deposing Power, and the lawfulness of the slaying of Princes by disaffected and aggrieved subjects. An interesting detail is the statement of one of the prosecutors: "It is evident . . . that the prisoner is guilty because it is well known with what fervour he has promoted his religion"—an observation very much in the manner of Scroggs. On the first day of the trial much was said by the prosecution about the Albigenes, St. Bartholomew's Day and the atrocities of Alva in Belgium.

In Fr. Warner's account of the last days of Blessed Oliver Plunkett we find the fantastic charges brought against the Archbishop but not the explanation of the circumstances that made this last of the Popish Plot cases the strangest of all. Naturally, he was not acquainted with the Irish background. The confiscations and the persecution, endemic since the Reformation, had created a mass of dispossessed and virtually destitute people who lived in a condition verging on banditry. Among them were many priests and particularly mendicant friars who shared the lot of their unfortunate relatives and friends. Some members of this underworld of ill-behaved and demoralised clergy, maddened by want and unmerited suffering, had resisted Plunkett's attempts to restrain disorders and had come to regard him with extreme hostility. From this *milieu* came his accusers. A London grand jury having rejected their absurd story, Blessed Oliver had then been tried in Ireland. He was not released on the collapse of the proceedings and eventually he was brought to trial in London; meanwhile, the witnesses, briefed by Shaftesbury, had enlarged and improved their story. How Blessed Oliver's witnesses were not given time to reach London is well known; the trial had started when they had got as far as Coventry. Fr. Warner adds that there was "a widespread belief that Blessed Oliver was put to death for no other reason than to help 'the Faction' to accept more easily the death of Fitzharris." That malefactor had been condemned in the King's Bench, at the King's instance, for treason, perjury and sedition, despite the manoeuvres of the House of

Commons¹ to save him. It was then contrived by the sheriffs that Fitzharris should be taken to Tyburn along with the Archbishop and hanged beside him on the same gallows.

The substantial portion of the narrative ends here and the last sections are of less interest. Fr. Warner does not devote much space to the Rye House Plot, which he calls likewise the "Presbyterians' Plot," and with the liberation of the three survivors² of the "Five Popish Lords in the Tower" the narrative moves quickly to a close.

The people of London, he considers, have great influence over the whole of England, not by any legally-established power but by the force of their example; that they were not responsible for the persecution, but peaceable when left to themselves—a surprisingly charitable judgment. On Charles II, he notes that the Merry Monarch had a great faculty for making friends of people but less for retaining their regard, and that if he had been as wise in his acts as in his speech he would have been unanimously judged equal to the greatest monarchs, past or present. Fr. Warner is careful to record that three times the King publicly and solemnly denied the Black Box story about the legitimacy of Monmouth; and that after Charles's death there were found in his desk two papers written in his own hand in which he refuted heresy and declared the truth of the Catholic Faith. The text of these two papers then follows.

The narrative ends in 1685 with a brief mention of the acquittal of Vernatti, who had been accused of Godfrey's murder, the punishment of Oates and Prance, and the coming of "the most illustrious and Reverend Doctor John Leyburn, Bishop of Adrametum, who was to take charge of the Church's affairs with Apostolic authority."

¹ *Vide* Section 611, above.

² Arundel, Bellasis and Powis; Petre died in the Tower in 1684.

ON THE DIGNITY OF MAN

Reflections on Hamlet's Speech

By

I. J. SEMPER

A RECENT COMMENTATOR, who regards Hamlet's speech on the dignity of man as a display of the latest Elizabethan jargon by which a young Wittenberg collegian seeks to impress his two classmates, argues that the passage should not be taken too seriously. However, virtually all other scholars who have commented on the speech do take it seriously, some, who interpret it as Neoplatonic in inspiration, holding that it epitomises the triumphant discovery of Renaissance man, while others, who label it as Thomistic in outlook, maintaining that it summarises the traditional view of medieval man.

Today, most critics would agree that in Hamlet's speech Shakespeare expresses conventional ideas which his age inherited from pagan antiquity, Holy Scripture, the early Fathers and the Schoolmen. During the Renaissance the theme of man's dignity as handed down in the thought and the literature of the past was restated by the writers of the time, although Pico della Mirandola and others did not hesitate to restate it with a new stress by tingeing it with Neoplatonism.

As regards Hamlet's speech a commentator must decide at the very outset whether he will use the reading of the Second Quarto (1604) or the reading of the First Folio (1623). The two versions differ in punctuation and phrasing, with a consequent difference in meaning. In his *Hamlet* (1936) Dr. John Dover Wilson provides a modernised version of the Quarto reading:

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god: the beauty

of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

And in his *Shakespeare* (1952) Dr. G. B. Harrison modernizes the spelling of the Folio text:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

It is obvious that, as far as the meaning is concerned, the main difference between these two texts resides in the Quarto reading, "how like an angel in apprehension," and the Folio reading, "In action how like an angel." The question as to which of these two readings is the true one has given rise to a heated controversy.

We shall base our interpretation of Hamlet's speech on the text of the Second Quarto, because we accept the judgment of the textual critics who argue that the Second Quarto was printed from Shakespeare's own manuscript. Of course, the technical arguments must be left to the experts, but, since the Second Quarto is the ancient copy, the odds are in favour of the view that Hamlet's speech as pointed and phrased in that copy is the original text.

Hamlet's opening sentence, "What a piece of work is a man," is equivalent to "What a masterpiece is a man." The expression, "a piece of work," suggests something fashioned by labour or activity, as in the creation of a work of art. The implication of Hamlet's opening sentence that man is a product of artistic planning and achievement is enforced by the lines which immediately precede this sentence. Hamlet prefaces his description of man the microcosm by picturing the macrocosm as "this goodly frame the earth . . . this most excellent canopy the air . . . this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire. . ." The terms "frame," "canopy," "roof," and "fretted" are architectural. Hence we are asked to visualise the earth as a spacious dwelling, the air as a crystalline covering, and the firmament as a roof adorned with the golden lamps of the stars. Hamlet thus regards the universe as a structure of order and design, with man as the chief tenant. If he does not mention the Divine Artist, it is because Shakespeare took for granted that

the audiences of the Globe, who were familiar with the argument from design, would draw the logical and obvious conclusion. However, it is unnecessary to labour this point, because in his last soliloquy (IV, iv) Hamlet, who begins his discourse on man's reason with the words, "Sure, He that made us," refers explicitly to the Creator.

Hamlet's next utterance, "how noble in reason," sounds the keynote to man's greatness. Nothing could be more Thomistic. To discover the nature of any being, it is necessary to know its operation. The operation proper to man is intellectual knowledge, by which he surpasses in dignity all other animals; and therefore we find St. Thomas specifying that "the intellectual principle is the proper form of man."¹ Intelligence is supreme, which explains why Horatio and Ophelia, when they speak of reason, use the terms "sovereignty" and "most sovereign" respectively. These terms echo the following passage by St. Thomas:

Man in a certain sense contains all things; and so accordingly as he is master of what is within himself, in the same way he can have mastership over other things. Now we may consider four things in man: his reason, which makes him like the angels; his sensitive powers, whereby he is like the animals; his natural forces, which liken him to plants; and the body itself, wherein he is like inanimate things. Now in man reason has the position of master and not of subject.²

In fact, the doctrine which Aquinas lays down concerning man's final happiness takes as its starting-point Hamlet's exclamation of reverent awe, "how noble in reason." Aristotle had taught that, since pure speculation is the highest activity of man, supreme happiness is to be found in the philosophic life of contemplation. Aquinas teaches that, over and above this philosophic happiness, there is a supernatural happiness which can be attained only when reason is aided by divine grace. And yet whether God is contemplated in the visible creation by the light of reason or whether He is seen face to face by means of the beatific vision, the end of man is an intellectual one. Thus the essence of beatitude resides in the vision of God, which is an act of the intellect, love being the inevitable consequence of this vision. Dante sums up the creed of Aquinas when he states that God is *il ben dell' intelletto*.

Having designated the "most sovereign reason" as man's

¹ *Summa Theologica*, I. 76. 1.

² *Ibid.* 96. 2.

characteristic gift, Hamlet proceeds to pay a tribute to the cognitive faculties in general and to the body as the perfect instrument of those faculties: "how infinite in faculties, in form and moving." At first sight this phrase would seem to suggest the exaggerated view of man's natural powers as taught by Neoplatonists of the Italian Renaissance. St. Thomas, however, does not hesitate to use the term "infinite" with reference to the faculties of man's soul. Unlike the lower animals, whose sense-perception extends only to single and concrete things, man can extract from the content of his sense-perception universal ideas, and thus his faculties are infinite in the sense that they can reach out to the infinite. So argues Aquinas:

The intellectual soul, as comprehending universals, has a power extending to the infinite; therefore it cannot be limited by nature to certain fixed natural notions, or even to certain fixed means whether of defence or of clothing, as is the case with other animals, the souls of which are endowed with knowledge and power in regard to fixed particular things.¹

Man, "infinite in faculties, in form and moving," is complex in his nature and activities, sentient and rational, cognitive and appetitive; but his bodily powers can express the thoughts and emotions of his soul. Aquinas writes as follows concerning the body as an instrument of the soul:

All natural things are produced by divine art, and may be called God's works of art. The artist intends to give his work the best dispositions, considered not absolutely but with regard to the proposed end. . . . Now the proximate purpose of the human body is the rational soul and its activities. I say, therefore, that God fashioned the human body in the disposition best suited to such a form and such activities.²

Moreover, it is this perfect correspondence between rational faculties and bodily powers which explains Hamlet's next comment, "how express and admirable in action." St. Thomas voices the same idea when he states that "man has by nature his reason and his hands, which are the *organs of organs*, since by their means man can make for himself instruments of an infinite variety, and for any number of purposes."³ Man is "express [*i.e.*, purposive, as Dr. J. Dover Wilson suggests] and admirable in action," because

¹ *Summa Theologica*, I. 76. 5 ad 4.

² *Ibid.* 91. 3.

³ *Ibid.* 76. 5 ad 4.

he possesses an intellect and hands, the instruments of progress and civilization which have literally changed the face of the earth.

The next phrase, "how like an angel in apprehension," is entirely in accord with the doctrine of Aquinas, who teaches that, although human knowledge, which is acquired by a discursive process, is unlike angelic knowledge, which is infused by God, nevertheless human knowledge is like angelic knowledge, because the two modes of knowing differ in degree and not in kind. He writes:

Other animals are so much lower than man that they cannot attain to the knowledge of truth which reason seeks. But man attains, although imperfectly, to the knowledge of intelligible truth which the angels know. Therefore the knowing power in the angels is not of a different genus from the knowing power in the human reason, but is compared to it as the perfect to the imperfect.¹

In addition, Aquinas holds that the intellect apprehends first principles by a kind of intuition. Hence, although the knowledge proper to man is reasoning, his intuitive grasp of first principles is a link with angelic intelligence.

It would seem, therefore, that St. Thomas would approve the Quarto text, "how like an angel in apprehension."² Does it necessarily follow that he would condemn the Folio text, "In action how like an angel"? When he deals with the angels he distinguishes between their essential ministry, which is the contemplation of God, and their external ministries on behalf of mankind. St. Paul refers to these external ministries when he writes: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them which shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"³ In dealing with the external ministries of angels St. Thomas follows the teaching of Holy Scripture that some angels function as God's messengers like Gabriel who was entrusted with the message of the Incarnation, while others serve as guardians of nations like the angel who went before the Israelites or as guardians of individuals like Raphael in the book of Tobias. In these instances the angels assumed a bodily form, and thus they exhibited the semblance of physical action. But it should be emphasised that

¹ *Summa Theologica*, I. 79. 8 ad 3.

² Cf. J. Dover Wilson, *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's "Hamlet"* (Cambridge 1934), II. 211-13.

³ Heb. i. 14.

these are exceptional cases. After all, if a man is to be compared to an angel, the comparison should be between what is characteristic in man and what is characteristic in an angel. Nowhere do we find Aquinas stating that human action is like angelic action. On the contrary, he always insists that man's reason "makes him like the angels." Moreover, he holds that even when angels are engaged in external ministrations they still exercise their essential function of contemplation. Consequently, if the Angelic Doctor is a guide, the Folio reading, "In action how like an angel," should be regarded as a corruption of the original text.

In recent years two determined attempts have been made to persuade readers of *Hamlet* to accept the Folio text as the authentic reading. In 1951 Dr. Roy W. Battenhouse contended that the Quarto phrase "goes contrary to Aquinas," because St. Thomas states that angels "apprehend the truth of things absolutely and without discursiveness," whereas "man arrives at the knowledge of intelligible truth by advancing from one thing to another."¹ Dr. Battenhouse thus assumes that the two modes of knowing, angelic and human, are so unlike that it is incorrect to predicate of man "how like an angel in apprehension." His argument need not detain us because it is based on a misapprehension of the doctrine laid down by St. Thomas. It is strange that he missed the corollary which, as we have seen, is stressed by Aquinas in his reply to the third objection in the very article from which Dr. Battenhouse quotes, namely, that the two modes of knowing, angelic and human, are like each other, inasmuch as they differ in degree and not in kind.

In an effort to bolster the Folio reading Professor G. Wilson Knight, in discussing angels as presented in Shakespeare's plays, has consistently maintained that the dramatist visualised them as "noble in action,"—"as athletic, generally riding, beings."² His contention raises the question, What impressions of angels would spectators at the Globe gather from a performance of the tragedy from passages other than the controverted phrase in the speech on the dignity of man? The functions which are assigned to angels in *Hamlet* are in strict accordance with Biblical and

¹ "Hamlet's Apostrophe to Man," *PMLA*, LXVI (December, 1951), 1088-89.

² See *The Times Literary Supplement*, 14 September, 1946; and *The Shakespearean Tempest* (London, 1953), p. 319.

Thomistic teaching. When Laertes exclaims: "A ministering angel shall my sister be," he refers to the essential function of angels, which is that of ministering to God by adoring contemplation. And when Hamlet invokes the aid of angels on two different occasions, he refers to their external occupations by which they minister to mankind. Face to face with the Ghost on the battlements of Elsinore, he cries out: "Angels and ministers of grace defend us"; and confronted by the Ghost in the Queen's closet, he prays: "Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings, You heavenly guards." The expressions, "ministers of grace" and "heavenly guards," summarise the chief external functions of the angels. Moreover, the doctrine of the guardian angels explains Horatio's liturgical prayer, "And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest." In expounding this doctrine St. Thomas argues that, since man is beset by the snares of demons, he needs a guardian angel; and he pictures the guardian angels as sustaining us in our conflict with the demons that "are in this dark atmosphere for our trial." It is fitting, therefore, that angels should conduct the souls that have been snatched from the snares of demons to the state which Hamlet styles "felicity." Thus, to answer the question which we propounded at the beginning of this paragraph, no Elizabethan who pondered the passages which we have cited would leave the playhouse under the illusion that the angels in *Hamlet* were notable for their athletic prowess in general and for their horsemanship in particular.

It has been asserted that the next phrase, "how like a god," apotheosises man after the manner of the Renaissance Platonists. It should be noted, however, that in "how like a god" we have a carry-over of the phrasal rhythm of "how like an angel," which may explain why Shakespeare did not write "how godlike" or "how like God." After all he was a popular playwright who wrote with great rapidity and often under pressure. Fortunately Hamlet himself, when he again discourses on man's reason, furnishes a gloss, which is decisive as regards the exact meaning to be attributed to the words, "how like a god." We quote from his last soliloquy (IV, iv):

Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused.

In this passage there is no ambiguity: man the creature is like his Creator, because his reason, the gift of the Creator, is "god-like." This passage echoes St. Thomas, who, in expounding the text in Genesis that man was made in the image of God, states that this image is common to all men and that it resides in the intellectual soul, which approaches so close to God in likeness "that among all creatures nothing comes nearer to Him."¹ Thus, even on the plane of nature man mirrors the angelic and the divine. In fact, his intellectual soul is so out of proportion to the vast material universe that Aquinas, anticipating Hamlet, could say: "Reason in man is rather like God in the world."²

With the phrases, "how like an angel in apprehension" and "how like a god," Hamlet's speech comes to a climax. The main function of the last two summarising phrases, "the beauty of the world" and "the paragon of animals," is to assign man his exact place in the hierarchy of being. Even from the physical standpoint man, with his upright carriage, his expressive features, his power of articulate speech, and his dexterous hands, is "the beauty of the world" and "the paragon of animals." If his body labels him an animal, his rational soul, which Hamlet has stressed up to this point, ranges him with angels and with God. He is thus "the beauty of the world," because he epitomises the whole wide world of matter and spirit. It is a commonplace of Thomistic philosophy that man has something in common with every other creature—being in common with minerals, life in common with plants, feeling in common with beasts, and intellect in common with angels. He is also "the paragon of animals," because he is the only animal that belongs on the confines of the great world of matter and the infinitely greater world of spirit, the only animal with a rational soul and the only intellectual being with a body.

In the chapter in which he describes the hierarchy of being, St. Thomas erects a gigantic ladder extending up to God, whose rungs are minerals, plants, beasts, men, and angels.³ On this ladder man, the highest in the scale of animality and the lowest in the scale of intelligence, stands midway, with the beasts, plants and minerals below him and the nine ascending choirs of angels above him. Hamlet follows Aquinas in placing man, who is "like an angel in apprehension" and "the paragon of animals," on the

¹ *Summa Theologica*, I. 93. 2.

² *Opusc.* XI, I de Regno, 12.

³ *Contra Gentes* IV, 11.

same rung of the cosmic ladder of being—between the beasts and the angels. His speech on the dignity of man, therefore, far from being a challenge to the traditional view of medieval man, conforms to that view.

Of course, Hamlet's melancholy mood explains why he brings his speech to a conclusion by referring to man as "this quintessence of dust," as it also explains why he previously referred to the resplendent universe as "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." It would be a mistake to regard these utterances as pointing to a philosophy of pessimism, which he may have acquired as a student at the University of Wittenberg. It is significant that he prefaces his discourse on the macrocosm and the microcosm by informing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that it is only "of late" that he has lost all his mirth. His melancholy outlook is motivated not by the study of pessimistic philosophers of the classical or the Renaissance period but by the impact of recent events in Elsinore—his father's sudden death, his mother's hasty marriage, and the ghastly disclosures of the Ghost.

Hamlet states the case for man's dignity not as a theologian but as a philosopher. Although he links man with angels and with God, he does not evaluate human dignity in terms of virtue, divine grace, or supernatural beatitude. This fact, however, should not lead us to conclude that he is overstating the claims of human reason. Virtue, grace, and the beatific vision have meaning for man only because he is a rational being. Aquinas, who teaches that reason leads to faith and that grace builds on nature, would be the last to condemn Hamlet's speech because it exalts human reason, as witness the pronouncement: "The divine rights of grace do not abolish the human rights of natural reason."¹

Those who claim that Hamlet's speech is tarred with the brush of Neoplatonism fail to consider how grossly the Renaissance philosophers exaggerated the power of human reason. Pico della Mirandola, for instance, lifts himself, as it were, by his bootstraps to the God of Christian revelation and theology. In the following passage he proposes to climb up to God on a Jacob's ladder of philosophic studies:

Yet this will not be enough if we wish to be companions of the angels going up and down on Jacob's ladder, unless we have first been well fitted and instructed to be promoted duly from step to

¹ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 10. 10.

step, to stray nowhere from the stairway, and to engage in the alternate comings and goings. Once we have achieved this by the art of discourse or reasoning, then, inspired by the Cherubic spirit, using philosophy through the steps of the ladder, that is, of nature, and penetrating all things from centre to centre, we shall sometimes descend, with titanic force rending the unity like Osiris into many parts, and we shall sometimes ascend, with the force of Phoebus collecting the parts like the limbs of Osiris into a unity, until, resting at last in the bosom of the Father who is above the ladder, we shall be made perfect with the felicity of theology.¹

Thus the soul, fortified by the study of dialectic, moral and natural philosophy, but apparently unaided by divine grace, ascends to God to be "*made perfect with the felicity of theology*" (italics added). In contrast to Pico, Hamlet keeps his speech at a strictly philosophic level, and hence it will be scanned in vain for any suggestion that human reason can do the work of divine grace.

Divine grace enters into the picture only when Hamlet's speech is studied in its context, that is, against the background of his religious creed. Since his creed includes a belief in God the Creator and the Lawgiver, in the immortality of the soul, in heaven, hell and purgatory, in angels and demons, in the appalling nature of sin and the consequent necessity of repenting and resolving for the future, and in the doctrine of Divine Providence, it is manifest that his speech on the dignity of man is the utterance of a Christian philosopher, who exalts human reason after the manner of Aquinas.

Moreover, it cannot be ignored that Shakespeare, contrary to his usual custom, leaves us in no doubt regarding the ultimate reward which awaits the soul of his philosopher-prince. Horatio's prayer over the dead body of his friend, "And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest," is in the great tradition of medieval liturgy and hagiography, art and drama; in fact, it is a paraphrase of the Church's antiphon in the burial service—*In Paradisum deducant te angeli*.² This liturgical prayer, in which a choir of singing angels is asked to convoy his soul to the other world, is singularly appropriate to Hamlet, who linked man with angels and with God and who was accustomed to invoke the aid of angels.

¹ *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Sec. 11, tr. Elizabeth L. Forbes (Chicago, 1951), p. 9.

² Cf. Brother Baldwin Peter, "Hamlet and *In Paradisum*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, III (July, 1952), 279-80.

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK¹

IT IS RIGHT perhaps that history, like science and astronomy, should have questions which remain unanswered. Man was divinely deprived of the fruit of one tree in the Garden of Eden. One historical mystery seems forbidden to the most careful research: who was the prisoner who lived between 1669 and 1703 in the State prisons of France under circumstances which were unparalleled and never repeated?

Where historians have been baffled the writers of propaganda and romance have stepped in, followed by the more serious detectives of research; Andrew Lang, Mgr. Arthur Barnes in this country, and now Mr. Furneaux. He has set us glimpsing a will-o'-the-wisp as elusive as the man of the same name as Shakespeare who wrote his plays—"the possibility that the masked man *may* have been someone of whom all mention was *kept out* of the correspondence." What correspondence? The surviving letters between the Master-Jailer Saint-Mars and the King's Ministers in Paris for twenty-nine years (1669-1698), after which the Prisoner was moved to the Bastille to be under their eyes.

It remains proven there was a prisoner in the flesh, whose name Mr. Furneaux associates with Eustache Dauger, brought prisoner from Dunkirk in 1669. The claims of Mattioli he rightly scouts as all investigators incline to do, chiefly because Mattioli was never a mystery. His fault and his punishment were as well-known in Europe as any recorded by Dante in black and white. The essential conditions of identification mark him as Saint-Mars' prisoner in the Pignerol and later in the Ile Sainte Marguerite, whence he brought him to the Bastille (11 September, 1698). By 1703 he had been a prisoner for thirty-three years, when he died and was buried under the false name of Marchioly. Mr. Furneaux thinks his name was Eustache Dauger and "he was a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic." A Frenchman certainly if he was Dauger—and whatever his name, all records testify to his religious resignation to fate and acceptance of Catholic sacraments.

We have a good chapter about Saint-Mars, whose position was like that of the Lieutenant of the Tower in Tudor times. The greatest state prisoners came under him and he treated them according to rank. The man in the black velvet mask received particularly kind treatment within the steely limits of his confinement. It seemed determined by Louis XIV that he should live the length of his days but that his identity, past, present and future should be veiled and obliterated. His whole character and existence have to be reflected from the lives of others, What then were his relations with other prisoners? There came such

¹ *The Man behind the Mask*, by Rupert Furneaux (Cassell 15s).

famous prisoners as Fouquet (Minister of Finance), Lauzun (hero of the best letter written by Mme. de Sévigné), Mattioli (a trickster minister of the Duke of Padua). But there were also valets and priests who only survive in history because they are mentioned in the correspondences as contemporary prisoners of the Mask.

Some of the cleverest minds in historical research have tried resolving the jigsaw which consists of facts and hints concerning the handful of Saint-Mars' prisoners. Fouquet, Lauzun and Mattioli present no trouble, for they were far from mysterious. All Europe knew who they were, where they were imprisoned and what they had done. The mystery centres round a handful of men described as valets, two supposedly priests and obscurities, to all of whom attaches the certainty that they were immured under false names or no name at all. One, Eustache Dauger, can be tolerably settled for the Mask, but the supreme question remains, who was he and why was he masked or immured? Lord Acton thought he would be discovered to be quite an unimportant person. Certainly he was not royal as legend has hoped. He was not treated too unkindly except for his rigorous confinement. He need not have been even noble. By his resignation and religious demeanour he may have been a priest. This is an important possibility for it supplies a reason why he was not murdered, supposing he carried a secret of vast consequence to the King. He may be presumed to be a courier, a minor diplomatist of sorts, who accidentally came across such a secret and was made to keep it for the rest of his life. If he was an innocent person and in holy orders, the King would never have dared to have him die without trace. He preferred as the most Christian King to have him live on without trace.

The King had nothing against him except that he was "dissatisfied with his behaviour." Louvois, the Minister, refers to him at the beginning when he was sent from Dunkirk to Pignerol as "this wretch" and "only a valet." But care must be taken in the exact translation from the French which may only mean "this unhappy man," while a valet did not carry the simple meaning of a body-servant. A valet might be a private secretary, a courier, an underling to a man of importance. In any case there is much play in the correspondence of Minister and Jailer concerning the "valets" in the State prison. Fouquet and Lauzun were permitted valets drawn from other prisoners, but under constant supervision lest they should reveal anything to each other, and the King was deeply interested. Nothing is more perplexing than the nervous, unallayed anxiety of Louis XIV into what his prisoners were up to, and more so in the "valets" than in their masters.

There is no doubt that Eustache Dauger held a secret, for at his first interview Saint-Mars threatened to run his prisoner through with his sword if he tried to explain who he was. The King's orders were that

he was not to be allowed to open his mouth except to mention necessities. Clearly this was something more than a valet if his speech, his behaviour and his locality were of unceasing interest to the King. Apart from the initial threat to run him through, everything was done to keep him alive, and his soul's health was not forgotten. He was allowed Mass on Sundays and Confession three or four times a year. And the years passed. Saint-Mars by process of promotion left Pignerol for Exiles; thence to the Ile Ste. Marguerite, and finally to the top of his profession, the governorship of the Bastille. He took two prisoners to Exiles in 1681. An important letter of Saint-Mars (discovered in 1869) proves that Mattioli stayed at Pignerol while the two prisoners described as "the gentlemen of the lower tower" were taken with utmost care and secrecy. One was probably Rivière, who had acted as Fouquet's valet and had to be kept very close till his death at Exiles seven years later. The other was Eustache Dauger.

Once more, intense security and a minimum of religious rite. The King has to approve the doctor chosen to attend them and name the Confessor chosen to hear their Confession once a year: "a good man and very old," reported Saint-Mars. Sentinels watched these two "valets" day and night, and even the priest who said Mass to them could not see them. At least they enjoyed this communion with the Church. One of the prisoners became dropsical and died. Before Saint-Mars' information reached Louvois, he received news that the King gave him command of the Ile Ste. Marguerite, the island prison off Cannes which has always been popularly associated with the Mask.

Henceforth Saint-Mars is busy visiting the island to inspect the newly-made prison for his wards. It is clear that the King intends to add the sea to perpetual guardianship by human means. One prisoner remains at Exiles who is to be conveyed not in a litter, which might break down, but in a chair covered with waxed cloth and, of course, hedged with guards. Saint-Mars writes later that during the journey the prisoner will not be allowed to hear Mass till he reaches the prison chapel of Ste. Marguerite. The only pleasant side to this story of inhuman incarceration is the humble and even religious acquiescence of the prisoner. At Pignerol Saint-Mars reported: "he says nothing, he lives content, like a man wholly resigned to the will of God and of the King."

The move to Ste. Marguerite was complete by 1687 after twelve days on the road, suffocating to the prisoner. For the first time curiosity was widely roused along the route. The mask was seen when the prisoner dined with Saint-Mars when passing through his estate and visiting his chateau *en route*. It was not merely a veil for the journey but became one of the mysteries of the Bastille, where it was seen. It was of black velvet, but no researcher has ever queried the mask as a regular

disguise for life-prisoners on the Continent. Were there not others wearing masks? It was only the legendary texture of iron which thrilled the curious and chilled the humane. I remember visiting a prison at Louvain before the sack of 1914 and noticing that all the prisoners, mostly murderers, were wearing masks of white cloth.

From the Ile Ste. Marguerite Saint-Mars reported that in the Province it was rumoured that the Mask was worn by a son of Cromwell or Monsieur de Beaufort, whose body had never been found at the siege of Candia. Prisoners who were not criminals were treated as royal guests. When Saint-Mars flogged two unfortunate Huguenot Ministers who would not stop singing or writing messages on linen, the King was astonished and forbade ill-treatment in future. Louis XIV "dealt with his people with all the humanity that was practicable in an age when humanity was unusual." The treatment of the Mask is accepted as kindly and courteous apart from the stark confinement. Therefore when historians ask, "What had Dauger done?" the answer is that he had done nothing.

Crime could have been met with suitable punishment. It is clear that Dauger had incurred the nervous anxiety of the King, who insisted on keeping him out of existence as a member of the human community. Possibly he had offended the King or Madame de Montespan beyond forgiveness. Lauzun had been sent for such a fault to the care of Saint-Mars, but with time Mdle. de Montpensier procured his release. The only reason that can be imagined for Dauger's treatment was that his freedom was a peril for the State. He knew a secret which would have imperilled the throne, much as the secret of Mrs. Fitzherbert's wedding to the Prince of Wales had to be kept a profound secret. As George IV he would have been relieved to send her a *lettre de cachet* such as Louis XIV served on Dauger. The facsimile of this document is one of the features of Mr. Furneaux's book as well as the certificate for his eventual burial from the Bastille.

It is unfortunate that more such documents could not be shown in their factual script instead of some rather imaginary pictures. For instance, it would be interesting to see the facsimile of the contemporary memoirs of Visconti (only printed in 1908) for they related the death in Rome in 1678-9 of the Abbé Pregnani whom Mgr. Barnes associated with Dauger and consequently the Mask.

Mgr. Barnes had some trump cards to support his theory, but not the ace. He always used to say that if the name of Pregnani ever turned up in Memoirs after his supposed arrest in 1669 his whole theory would topple over. It is therefore important to prove that Visconti was referring to this particular Abbé (there may have been others of the name). This gentleman was an Abbé and an astrologer, a friend of the Duke of Monmouth, and had been employed to reach Charles II to influence

him towards a French alliance to say nothing of encouraging his Catholic leanings. When the Abbé appears in the letters of Henriette with her brother the King of England, the secret Treaty of Dover shoots into perspective. It seems too brilliant to be true, especially as the Man in the Mask was arrested at Dunkirk only a few days after Pregnani can be traced to have returned from England.

Was the Mask in holy orders? Mgr. Barnes found a hint in the strange letter of 1680 giving Saint-Mars permission to put Mattioli with another prisoner described as a mad Jacobin priest in order to avoid the necessity of having *two priests* together. The Jacobin had been accorded a breviary which is not recorded of the Mask: but surely part of the total disguise laid upon him would exclude any recognition that he was a priest.

We are told, "Barnes bases his theory that Pregnani was imprisoned for life on Colbert's letter to Lionne in which he warns the Minister for Foreign Affairs that Pregnani had been made privy to all the secrets of the negotiations between France and England." Pregnani carried a dispatch which was unaccountably delayed *en route*. Had Pregnani made a muddle, thereby causing the King's displeasure? Was it in England or in France that he tripped as a secret agent and was summarily put out of the business for life? Secret agents who make mistakes invariably pay great penalties if not by death. But if it can be proved that this Abbé Pregnani died later in Rome, then the most appealing and fascinating candidate for the Mask is wiped out. Barnes, Lang and Acton were moving through a maze and all but discovering some perfect solution—but always to be baffled.

Perhaps the mystery-loving world would be unhappy for ever if the Man in the Mask were really solved. A few insoluble mysteries remain to salt or sauce the dull tundras of documented history. How duller they will become if the fate of the Dauphin (Louis XVII) is ever accurately established. Was the Duke of Praslin allowed to escape from prison after a pretended suicide when he had murdered the Duchess? People alive remember nearly fifty years ago when the body of Mr. Druce was exhumed. The supporters of the theme that he was an eccentric Duke of Portland were bitterly disappointed to find the coffin was not full of stones.

Mgr. Barnes was convinced that the tomb of Bacon in St. Albans Abbey would be found empty! Was his body not in Shakespeare's grave? Barnes' book¹ undertook to show that James de la Cloche (Acton's discovery in the Jesuit Archives at Rome) was a natural son of Charles II and under various aliases acted as his father's secret agent with Rome, his last disguise being that of the Abbé Pregnani. De la Cloche existed but his papers were forgeries. Pregnani, a different person, existed and references to him in the royal and diplomatic

¹ *Man of the Mask* (1908).

correspondences are far from forged, but his value depends on his death recorded in the *Memoirs of Visconti*.

Finally Mr. Furneaux endeavours to prove that Eustache Dauger was Eustache de Cavoye as identified by Mr. Duvivier in 1932, and M. Laloy suggests that he had angered the King personally.

There can be no miraculous reason that the truth which was subsequently denied to the royal family of France should have been revealed to the clever manipulations of an Andrew Lang or a Mgr. Barnes in the dust of history, to say nothing of the forty French authors and antiquarians who have turned over the possible papers but never succeeded in turning the key. Louis XIV must have known the secret, for he brought it about and survived his victim by twelve years. Did he ever tell the Regent and did the Regent tell Louis XV, who was five years old when he succeeded in 1715? Louis XV and Louis XVI both said Mattioli was the Man in the Mask. Mattioli has been thoroughly disproved. Perhaps they also were continuing the mystery, but was the truth told to Louis XVIII, who asked the first thing after meeting the Duchess of Angoulême whether she knew who was the Mask?

We simply do not know. It can only be agreed that men may spend their lives trying in vain to release a mystery which other men spent their lives achieving as a permanent one. The secret must have been worth the immense trouble. Some secret treaty is the best guess, perhaps one that is still unknown?

SHANE LESLIE

REVIEWS

THE WORKINGS OF GRACE

Flesh and Blood, by François Mauriac, translated by Gerard Hopkins (Eyre and Spottiswoode 10s 6d).

THIS IS AN EARLY MAURIAC, first published as long ago as 1920, and is as fine a work as any in the series. Thanks to Mr. Graham Greene and Mr. Gerard Hopkins the British reading public have now been given ample opportunity of appreciating M. Mauriac's qualities as a novelist: the ingredients which go to the make-up of a Mauriac novel are now familiar to us—the sense of conflict and of contrast, the economy of means, the touches of irony, the masterly

characterisation, and the life-line of faith, grasped or rejected, but running through each book from the first page to the last. All of which ingredients have been made use of in this book to the greatest possible advantage. As the story opens we see Claude Favereau returning home from his seminary after deciding that his vocation has failed. His father, a peasant and former non-commissioned officer, is grieve on an estate which has recently passed into new hands. Young Claude settles down to work under his father, who lives in a wing of the chateau, as a labourer in the seignorial vineyard. Presently the new proprietor, M. Dupont-Gunther, an urban industrialist of Huguenot extraction, with his son and daughter, Edward and May, and his elderly mistress, Mme. Gonzales, appear and take up residence in the chateau. M. Dupont-Gunther is a tyrant and a snob and is only just beginning to break away from his mistress's influence, and moreover wishes his daughter to marry young Marcel Castagride, the only son of a prosperous Catholic family in the city. Claude however falls in love with May, though he is prevented by his feeling of inferior social status from making any overt declaration. At this point Mme. Gonzales produces a grown-up daughter, Edith, a lady of some physical but certainly no other attraction, and aims at marrying her off to her elderly lover. Edith however prefers young Edward, an easy victim, who escapes momentarily from her clutches to Paris, only to be followed up by the now roused tigress and cornered there. In the meantime May, annoyed by her brother's desertion, decides to accept Marcel and become a Catholic. Herein we see the working of grace through, and almost in spite of, the twisted motives of men, inasmuch as the sentiments inspired by Claude's love were responsible in no small measure for the girl's decision. Finally Edward, brought to bay, buys a revolver and bolts to Chalons, where from a room in a shabby hotel he writes two notes, one to Edith and one to Claude, saying: "Be here by Sunday night or it will be too late." Claude realises at once what this message means but has no money for the journey. After vainly trying to borrow some from his father he succeeds in a like demand to the parish priest, but is thwarted at the last minute by his enraged parent who locks him into his room. By the time he has broken out it is too late and he only arrives at Chalons after the worst has occurred and Edward has shot himself. Edith's reaction is equally characteristic. She too realises all that lies behind the message. but puts off her departure for reasons of social convenience until she too arrives too late. Nor, having arrived, does she stay long, but hurries back to Paris. In the train going back "she drove from her mind, like a fly, something that Mme. Gonzales had whispered in her ear the previous evening. It had been obsessing her. 'When a man kills himself for a woman, my pet, her fortune is made.'"

Such is the story, unremarkable in outline it may be, but rich in content. Once more the countryside of the Gironde and its climate, the vineyards, the blazing sun, the sudden storms, the forests of the Landes on the horizon, play their impressive parts: the strongly contrasted characters—the cynical scheming Mme. Gonzales, the Gunther family, the hardened old sinner of a father, the weak, charming son doomed from the start by reason of his ineffectiveness, and the innocent daughter; Claude, weak too, but redeemed by an innate goodness; the father, narrow-minded and irascible; the Abbé Paulet, a workaday figure but with more than a suspicion of the saint about him—all these are there. There are the familiar touches of poetry too and the occasional flashes of humour.

"May . . . set off through the vineyard and opened the rusty iron gate which gave on to a fieldpath which led to Viridis. A distant bell announced the conclusion of Mass." One may find oneself in strange places sometimes under M. Mauriac's guidance, but never for long beyond the sound of the comfort of that distant bell.

JOHN MCEWEN

CRAFT OF LANGUAGE

Language as Gesture, by R. P. Blackmur (Allen and Unwin 25s).

CODDLED, as we are, by English critics who express, or fail to express, their meanings within the confines of the Pocket Oxford Dictionary, the spaciousness of diction in American critics is apt to prove both a trial and a pleasure. Sometimes we feel that their coining of abstracts, in the manner of German scientific studies, is a cumbrous device which could have been avoided; but Mr. Blackmur presses into service, in addition to these ambiguous improvements, a host of homely and normal English words which we have lazily succeeded in forgetting. It is this sensitive fresh verbal texture (allied too often to a super-subtle syntax) which guarantees our interest in Mr. Blackmur, a critic passionately attentive to words.

Nor does this attention mark the limit of his curiosity. Mr. Blackmur has a mind at the same time critical and expansive, by which I mean that he focuses down in order to examine a particular text only, thereupon, to re-lengthen his focus to read, by insight or speculation, a number of problems that lie behind it. But varied though these problems may be, they all converge and bear upon his prime passion: how shall literature in our time be understood, sustained, and assisted; how shall sincerity in writing be retained; and form and technique preserved and developed.

Language as Gesture is the first book by Mr. Blackmur to be published in this country. It reprints selected essays from two previous works, *The Double Agent* (1935) and *The Expense of Greatness* (1940), to which are added eight further studies. In a sub-title Mr. Blackmur describes his volume as constituting "Essays in the Craft and Elucidation of Modern Poetry," and his subjects include Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats, D. H. Lawrence, Hart Crane, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings and Marianne Moore. For English readers, the most profitable essays will be those on the American resident poets. Three are devoted to Wallace Stevens—a teaser to the unguided intelligence—in which the poet's method is analysed as one of verbal elaboration, in contrast to the methods of Eliot and Pound who gain their effects through a technique of condensing. Writing on Stevens, Mr. Blackmur observes that "it is one of the advantages of a non-dramatic, meditative style [such as this poet uses] that pure rhetoric may be introduced into a poem without injuring its substance," and remarks, in an essay on Marianne Moore, that understatement is a misnomer for rhetoric's most potent weapon. To the quiet detached mazes of Marianne Moore's verse, Mr. Blackmur brings illumination. By characterising it as possessing "the peculiar, unassignable, indestructible authority of speech overheard," and by stressing the sleight by which the poet takes the colloquial (or the quoted) and deprives it of its immediate savour so as to give it a permanency of calm, he enables us to draw nearer to the body of this strange, intricate, and distant verse.

Mr. Blackmur's writing is not without its hint of contradiction. Approvingly he speaks of Miss Moore's poems as "expedient forms for ecstasies apprehended," yet when he comes to D. H. Lawrence, he tells us that we cannot talk about "the art of his poetry because it exists only at the minimum level of self-expression." Either we must distinguish between "ecstasy" and "self-expression" (which Mr. Blackmur does not do) or admit that what is good in Miss Moore must be allowed as good in Lawrence.

For English readers who do not know the poetry of E. E. Cummings in bulk, Mr. Blackmur's essay is not the best lead-in, concentrating, as it does, on one defective aspect of the poet's style (his monotonous preference for certain epithets, subjectively understood) to the exclusion of positive virtues. The severities visited on Emily Dickinson by Mr. Blackmur seem more to the purpose in that they elicit and expose flaws of a more general nature.

Literally enough, Mr. Blackmur defines criticism as "the collection of facts about literary works"; and perhaps his most valid labours can be placed under such heading; but he has also thought long and deeply on vaster and more vexing questions. Thus, he describes the substance of tradition as "those modes of representing felt reality persuasively and

credibly and justly, which make up, far more than metres and rhymes, the creative habit of imagination." This carries us some distance beyond the point where judgment can be verified by reference to the page; but these are matters which, elude them as we will, return to solicit an attitude from us.

Decorum is the child of tradition; and decorum is stated by this critic to consist in "the possession of a good supply of old orders through which we cope with or understand our experience." Now just as decorum provides us with the apposite form or shape for a poem, gesture provides us with the personality, the efficacious spirit, of the language employed. "Language as gesture," asserts Mr. Blackmur, "creates meaning as conscience creates judgment." It is found in words deprived of their ordinary meaning and in words that go beyond their meaning, and is "the sum or product of all the meanings" of words in a given context. Decorum and gesture, as Mr. Blackmur sees them, are the two chief means by acceptance of which the poet can get on with his job of writing. In a way it can be said of Mr. Blackmur that he wishes to inherit the order and pattern of the past without subscribing to its principles of faith, a predicament not uncommon amongst us. But in these border-line encounters between metaphysics and literary criticism, Mr. Blackmur shows himself a wily skirmisher, and what he takes as booty he strives to make his own.

This is a book of value and importance.

DEREK STANFORD

THE MEANING OF SANCTITY

The Pure in Heart: A Study in Christian Sanctity, by W. E. Sangster (Epworth Press 18s 6d).

DR. SANGSTER, Minister of the Westminster Central Hall, is in agreement with the Breviary hymn for Prime—*Sint pura cordis intima*, and with the Sequence that asks that the Holy Spirit may fill the inmost of our hearts—*Reple cordis intima Tuorum fidelium*—that is, he holds that man can be made holy, and not just be forgiven. He agrees too that holiness is an idea that has grown foreign to us, and he thinks that it is best to study holiness, not by means of definitions, but by observing it "incarnate," supremely in Our Lord, and in those who were manifestly in His likeness, animated by His Spirit, whatever their "denomination" may have been. He rightly expects us to be glad wherever we encounter that likeness and that Spirit, and quotes the delight of a Plymouth Brother on hearing of St. Francis of Assisi, and of a Catholic, on being shown Charles Wesley's hymns. (We wish he

had quoted finer lines from these and others.) We admire the width of the author's reading and of his sympathy and, consequently, the variety of his illustrations. It is on these that we wish, on the whole, to concentrate, as indeed he invites us to do. On page 39 he reminds us that the New Testament's "emphasis" is on *growth*, and we think he may not always remember this, as when he speaks of the "ill-tempered Jerome" being canonised "for service rather than sanctity" and of his "flight" to Palestine as the weaker option—well, Jerome was not "canonised" in the modern sense, but, despite the "temper" he was always having to fight, popular instinct recognised sanctity in him, just as the Roman populace recognised it in Pius X even in his lifetime. It remains, not all the actions of a saint-in-the-making will be holy, though they may be mistakes that only a saint-to-be would commit. Such may be the refusal of Claver to visit his home. Dr. Sangster, after describing canonisation in the Roman, the Greek, and the Anglican church, and the lack of it in Protestantism, and thanking God for the "wealth of treasures of holiness" in all of these, makes a portrait of a saint according to the fruits of the Spirit harvested in him—love, joy, and the rest; and in Part IV shows "How they arrived," by way of worship, faith, death of self, the life of love. Every chapter in Parts III and IV is full of insight and deserves expansion, especially when difficult topics like "death of self" are tackled. Perhaps single sentences spoken by the saints seldom fully express their meaning and may even belie it. We think, for instance, that "faith" as used by St. Paul seems (not unexpectedly) to be explained too simply as "trust," though it certainly also means acceptance of a truth *taught*. "Love" may never be a "blaze" in the saint; he may live to the end in dark and cold: indeed, rather as the aging saint may be able to lessen his "self-sought sufferings," so ecstasies and the like will fade: the lightning-flashes of God's invasions of the soul become the glow of His abiding peaceful presence. Dr. Sangster gently deprecates our having written that we do not find "the true equivalent" of the saint outside the "Catholic environment, creed and practice." We cannot discuss that here. On page 50 the author says that a "reverent observer from outside" might suppose that in the Catholic Church Our Lady has taken the place of the Holy Spirit: that for "all practical purposes" the Holy Trinity in that Church is Father, Son and the Virgin Mary. He agrees that while "the opinion is honest and the impression widespread," it is that of one "outside": and perhaps (to speak personally) I, being now inside, cannot deny that I feel even the noblest examples found elsewhere are still but approximations to that total sanctity which is realised within what I mean by the *Res Catholica*—"le Christianisme au grand complet."

C. C. MARTINDALE

MYSTICISM OF ST. BERNARD

The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard, by Étienne Gilson (Sheed and Ward 12s 6d).

The Last of the Fathers, by Thomas Merton (Hollis and Carter 10s 6d).

IN HIS ENCYCLICAL LETTER *Doctor Mellifluus*, issued in 1953 for the eighth centenary of St. Bernard's death, the Holy Father exhorted the faithful to study and meditate upon the spiritual teaching of St. Bernard. It was therefore an excellent idea to reprint (in a slimmer and more elegant format) Étienne Gilson's *Mystical Theology of St. Bernard*, a book which is likely to remain the standard work on the subject for a very long time.

Thomas Merton's book contains, at the end, a complete English translation of the Encyclical *Doctor Mellifluus*. To prepare the way for this, the reader is given a rapid sketch of St. Bernard's life, a brief account of his principal writings, and nineteen pages of "Notes on the Encyclical," which in many parts are little more than a paraphrase of the text. The supplementary matter does not cast as much light on the Encyclical as one might have hoped. The passages from St. Bernard quoted in the Encyclical present certain obvious questions which are not discussed—for example, the transference from human love to divine of strong physical imagery, the danger (of which St. Bernard was clearly aware) that a man's love of God may be tainted with traces of carnality, the mysterious way in which descriptions of the highest mystical experiences appeal to the hearts of ordinary readers who can lay claim to no such experiences. It cannot be that these questions were considered too elementary, since what is given is even more so. Again, one of the chief merits of Gilson's work is that it reveals the theological structure around which St. Bernard's mystical teaching is built; one wonders why Merton did not give a brief digest of Gilson's synthesis, so as to enable the reader to contemplate the system as a whole. Clearly this omission is not due to any disapproval of the attempt to systematise, since Merton has dedicated his book to Gilson. Further, the comments Merton does make are sometimes curiously disappointing. For example, St. Bernard makes the remarkable statement that "love knows nothing of reverence"—which surely, more than anything else in the Encyclical, calls for explanation. If Merton comments on this at all, it is when he says: "since God Himself is love, nothing can give Him greater honour than our love"—which is true, but not the point. St. Bernard's doctrine, based on 1 John iv. 18, is that the jubilant confidence of "ardent love" temporarily drives out of the soul those sentiments of self-abasement which it normally feels before the overwhelming majesty of God. Gilson goes into the matter

on page 141, suggesting that what St. Bernard means to say is rather that pure love is *inclusive* of all other affections.

So while readers will certainly profit from *The Last of the Fathers*, they may perhaps be left with the feeling that some splendid chances have been missed.

JOHN BLIGH

SHORTER NOTICES

Three Men: An Experiment in the Biography of Emotion, by Jean Evans (Gollancz 15s).

IN AN INTRODUCTION, Dr. G. W. Allport, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, wishes that professional psychologists came more often and more closely into contact with "lives as lived": reports of cases tend to be written in a jargon, to reflect the writer's personal bias, and to be made too quickly. However, Miss Evans has spent infinite pains over the cases she reports, and has been scrupulously true to what she has observed. We may regret her sub-title. Much more than "emotion" is studied, and "experiment" inevitably suggests that the experiment is made on persons, like guinea-pigs, rather than in a new sort of "biography."

M. B., her third case, is the least likely to arouse sympathy. His life was warped by a mother, hungry for money and social position, and an elder brother who, being stronger, bullied him. M.B. developed a torturing self-consciousness, inferiority-complex, and futile desire to be a Super-being and a "centre." He writes all this down till his room is ceiling-high with manuscript: he is still, apparently, torn between the desire to escape from the strong, and to emulate and surpass them.

W. M.'s history has for its most remarkable point that for six years he had been going blind and for two and a half had been totally blind. He had been pronounced to be suffering from "advanced optic atrophy . . . improvement hopeless." One morning he woke up with atrocious headaches and found he could see. Every imaginable test was applied; the optic atrophy subsided; "he had no right to see," still—he saw. After a considerable time, his vision fluctuated. Finally, it would seem, he went totally blind again. While he could see, he became expert in forestlore, wild life, and so on, and married. But he had always suffered from emotional instability, phobias, and misery in the institutions where he was periodically enclosed. He provides a problem not only to ophthalmologists but to students of the bewildering illnesses of ecstatics.

"Johnny Rocco" is a challenge to us also as Catholics. Son of Italian immigrants, growing up in an appalling slum, and in a home such that merely to be a "Rocco" was, even there, to be branded. Was this boy,

unable to learn or to be disciplined, "defective"? Surely not! But if he were—well, we have heard a Catholic enterprise for defectives condemned on the ground that a "defective" cannot commit a grave sin, and so, cannot lose his soul. *We*, apparently, need feel no responsibility towards them. As for Johnny's religion, he said that "the Church lays down the law but doesn't explain it in English . . . I don't believe in the Catholic Church in the way you're supposed to, but I believe in *good* . . . You sit in the house of God, but it would be better if they talked in English. It would be better if they explained different things—people need someone to explain . . . In the Catholic Church everything is a sin." We recognise every word of that. It is not a defective, who hungers for explanation! But to explain means that the explainer sympathises with his hearer—to sympathise does *not* mean just "be sorry for," but so to enter that hearer's mind that he *feels what he is feeling*, and can start from where he is, and not from a "cathedra" high aloft. If any souls are imperilled in this sorry business, they are those of the landlords who draw rents from such slums: and would to God we had more men like the "Mr. O'Brien" who could spend such infinite patience over Rocco; and very many welfare-workers like Miss Evans—for that maltreated word applies in its best sense to her. Her book is a work that will enlighten countless men and women of good will, who yet have no understanding of what needs to be done, and can be done, especially when God's grace assists their intelligence. But no action will avail if we cannot count on total abdication of all intrusive curiosity, and on the maximum of enduring self-disregard on the part of the worker.

The Priest in Our Day, compiled by F. E. Nugent (The Newman Press \$2.75).

THAT BOOKS should be written to inspire the clergy is good, and this book is composed of excellent chapters, mostly concerned with a priest's spiritual and ascetic life. Several of the chapters deal, no doubt, with the apostolic vocation which is every priest's, but frankly, we do not see that they are peculiarly suited to "our day." Thus we think that today especially we need a deep knowledge of the Scriptures, and in particular of Our Lord's life as a *vie vécue*, since in general that Life is less and less known, and our sermons mostly follow the Sunday's gospel so that whole tracts of Our Lord's life may remain unmentioned—and there are plenty of awkward texts that we are apt to shirk. Authors keep turning out new religious books—clever, original, what you will, but how thin, how languid, compared with the divine Scriptures; and how less cogent are sermons which do not drive home the very words of Christ and His apostles! Two matters undoubtedly concern the priests of today—namely, peace among the

peoples that we pray for, and the persecutions that we see. There is a courageous chapter by Fr. Gillis on the "Priest and Persecution," and the probability that the priest who preaches the full Christian doctrine will have to face the persecution it provokes. And he certainly will, even if he gives people any excuse for calling him a political priest. We are not asking priests to be party-politicians; but justice and charity alike demand that they should know what is happening in the world, and to *care* if noble nations like the Hungarians, the Poles, the Croats and Slovenes are being persecuted already, and if their children are progressively being deprived of Christian education. Does this mean that the priest of today should keep pace with world-affairs? We think it definitely does, and that Catholic Literature (see the article by Fr. Garesché) should at any rate include vivid information and accurate guidance about such subjects, since already it was long ago said that there is no major problem that is not now international—shall we rather say, super-national? Anyway the Catholic cannot be an exclusivist; and if a priest happens to feel that the pulpit is not a suitable place for such topics, a lecture-room certainly is, and it is constantly found that if the very art of reading seems to be dying out, sheer curiosity will cause people to listen! And since travel becomes more difficult, and impossible in several countries, we would recommend the use even of the old-fashioned lantern, to make known to all what the ancient Catholic cultures were, which are being so ruthlessly destroyed. But none of this will be any good if Charity be lacking, if we feel bitterness towards even the most cruel of those who today are crucifying Christ afresh. And we think that a loving unselfishness will ensure that "sociableness" for which Fr. Holland rightly asks, without risk of that artificial geniality which we sometimes do display and which is not the same as friendliness.

The Same Scourge, by John Goldthorpe (Longmans 12s 6d).

WE ARE ALWAYS NERVOUS when a writer undertakes to amplify the gospel-story or introduces personages or events, known from the gospels, into a story of his own. This, not only because we might encounter something that jarred on our sense of Christian doctrine, but because the gospel narrative is so perfect in its exquisite outline that we shrink from any decoration of it. Still, it is an outline, and we are apt to see the chief personages to any one incident as isolated, instead of being, as a rule, in a seething uproarious mob—men "suffocating" Our Lord, "treading one another down": we read sentences and treat them as spoken to *our* ears, and hook some moral sentiment on to them, without realising what they sounded like to Jewish ears; and how we risk, *e.g.*, in retreats, trying to make the incident "come alive"

by adding pictorial details out of our own heads. In this book we need not fear that. The author has spent many years studying the society, Roman and Jewish, in which the life of Our Lord, His associates, His enemies, was an integral part. The protagonist, a Roman officer, Dorio, detailed to collect information about what was brewing in Galilee, is alive, though we think that the description of Caiphas and especially Pilate is still better. Only now and again do we feel a slight incongruity—we do not think a Jew would have alluded to “free will”—not even Greek or Roman really had a word for it; or that a Roman officer would have mentioned “sentiment,” but we are grateful that Mr. Goldthorpe uses no pseudo-archaic jargon, even though we find, here and there, a trace of modern slang. He knows how to be ironically humorous, as when he tells of the interrogation of the man born blind and cured, though St. John’s own compressed account is still more sardonic: his account of the healing of the boy Timothy is lovely: the line or two which tells how *someone else* saw Judas escaping from the Cenacle is impressive in its economy, though we think that his canvas is often over-crowded. He describes (what we so easily by-pass) the appalling shock administered by the Eucharistic Discourse (John vi.) and the impression made upon Dorio when he was scourged with the scourge still caked with Our Lord’s blood, so that he “drank” it into his very veins: here is a touch of genuine mysticism. At the end, an officer says that it seems as if the whole world had gone mad. “Not yet,” smiled Dorio, “not yet.” Alas, not even now. The book, then, is an authentic record combined with creative ability: we find in it psychological insight which compensates, almost, for some lack of power to make us feel what the exterior of persons or places looked like.

The Unhurrying Chase, by H. F. M. Prescott (Eyre and Spottiswoode 12s 6d).

THIS WAS PUBLISHED as long ago as 1925 and went through many impressions. The great popularity of Miss Prescott’s beautiful and unusual book, *The Man on a Donkey*, certainly warranted its re-appearance. The story is placed in the mid-twelfth century, round about Angoulême. It concerns Yves de Rifaucon, whose small estate was seized by Richard of Poitou (afterwards Richard II of England) before Yves could inherit it. His life became distracted by his desperate desire to regain his fief and by his infatuation for a Golden Countess, during which he began to sink to being a troubadour in the Courts of Love—later he sank still further into the utterly degraded ranks of the “routiers,” mercenaries at the disposal of the feudal lords. He murdered his best friend, committed dreadful sacrilege, yet in the end his

mystical vocation, announced so long ago, mastered him, and he followed the Cross. Miss Prescott's rich knowledge of the times enables her to describe in vivid detail the prevalent customs of lords and ladies alike, of ruffians and of vassals. Curiously enough, we cannot so easily picture the castles, the gardens, the huts. She helps us to realise how faith could survive strongly even when eclipsed by rage or lust. We venture to regret her use of semi-archaic diction—"yea" for "yes," "ye" for "you," "he gat him his sword," and so forth, and her reminders that we are living long later just when we were feeling part of her drama—"at that time one more smell would not have been noticed." Of course she wants to let us know that the stagnant moat did smell, but then none of her characters would have known it did or have been able to tell us! We think, too, that the influence, or memory, of St. Bernard would have come piercing through the crowded consciousness of these men, even the routiers.

The Image of God in Sex, by V. Wilkin, S.J. (Sheed and Ward 6s).

THE AUTHOR is chaplain to the Catholic students of Liverpool University, so possibly it is these whom he has in mind and for whom he has written and perhaps spoken about this subject. If so, we congratulate him on setting the standard high. This really means that it is no good discussing any vital subject save at Christian-level. And we are sure that Catholic readers or listeners prefer it. They do not expect to be offered a merely hygienic, economic or opportunist view. Hence, after an introductory chapter and one called, simply, "God," there follows one called "Christ." The Mystical Body is a notion which, by now, is tending to be familiar, though less than fifty years ago it was hardly mentioned. Thus we reach Marriage "in itself," and Christian Marriage in particular, together with its ritual and a wise explanation of "Churching," which is still sometimes misunderstood. The book will help those who are seriously anxious to learn, and give no satisfaction to the merely curious.

L'Evangile et les Evangiles, by J. Huby, re-edited and amplified by X. Léon-Dufour, S.J. (Beauchesne n.p.).

THIS IS THE ELEVENTH VOLUME in the series *Verbum Salutis*, that admirable commentary on the documents composing our New Testament, and it aims at showing how the Gospel was first preached, and how the documents known as our four gospels came to be written; this is followed by a discussion of each of the four evangelists. Fr. Léon-Dufour has brought the late Fr. Huby's admirable work up-to-date so far as the nature of the case allows, for new

theories about the composition of the gospels are constantly being formed. The essential question is: since the four documents in question were composed within a Community and by members of that Community, how far can they be trusted to be history? This book gives reasons, in very condensed form, for holding that an early Christian author can not only write in the "form" proper to his environment, but also transmit perfectly trustworthy history, and this, after all, is only common sense: we are inclined to think that the critical analysis of the gospels has run its course; and that the detection of various superimposed layers in our documents has no future but further subjectivism. This book will be very useful for those who are called to teach: we fear we have not a Catholic laity sufficiently numerous and alert to warrant our hoping for its wide diffusion. May the good old custom of Scripture *lessons*, in churches or halls, be revived. How enriched would be our sermons, our devotional life, and our religious perspective!

Bede: A History of the English Church and People (Penguin Books 3s 6d).

B E D E's *History* is irreplaceable as the main source of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon England until A.D. 731, but its charm and readability lie in the character of its author, which while never obtruding is always present, providing a humble touchstone in time against which the past can be measured.

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